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The
North American
Review

Abraham Lincoln and Father Abraham

The Reluctant Chessman

Murphy in Missouri

Three to Five

Lament

Fiction, Poetry, Departments, and Reviews

Volume 251/2 *March 1966* *$1.00*

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The Fabulist

Once upon a time there was a young, handsome knight who rode out one day seeking adventure. He went through highlands and lowlands, but he saw no dragons. Finally he came to a beautiful city.

He knocked on the gate and asked admittance, but the attendants said that only by rescuing the princess of their king, who was about to sacrifice herself to an ogre, could the knight enter. Just then the princess came riding by. She was clothed in white silk, and her arms were more lovely than all the silver bracelets that graced them. Her hair was of spun gold, and her eyes more blue than the deep sea. Her figure was like that of a goddess, and her movements were soft and gentle as a butterfly. Her mouth quivered slightly because she was almost in tears at the thought of her terrible fate.

"Wait," said the knight. "I will rescue you."

Forthwith he rode ahead of her to meet the ogre, and, after a terrible battle, beheaded him.

The princess bowed her head. "I am yours, if you will have me."

The knight rode back with her to the city, and they were married the same day.

That night he entered his bride's chamber and said to her, "Beloved, all my life I have dreamed of someone as lovely as you. Come into my arms and let us be happy forever."

"Wait," said the bride, "and I will show you true happiness. You would have me in your arms, but I, because I also love you, will show you something better. You must take your sword and cut my head in two."

The knight, being somewhat acquainted with enchantment, kissed his bride tenderly and then took out his sword. With one mighty stroke on the top of her golden hair, he split her head down to the neck. As she was falling to the floor, there came from her head not blood—but money. Her head was filled with twenty dollar gold pieces. When the groom cut open her stomach, he found it was filled with pure silver, and, upon examination, he found her breasts were filled with pearls. The knight took out all the valuables and burned the skin.

"I am rich," he thought, "beyond my wildest dreams. The only true happiness is money."

Victor Contoski

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THE MOOD FOR LOVE

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." So John begins. A little later John completes, *"God is Love."*

This would seem to be a statement simple enough for anyone to comprehend. In early times, the lowly and the ignorant understood this concept as well and as quickly as did learned men of the world such as Paul and Luke. Multitudes rejected the fearful avenging Jehovah. *"Father, Who art in heaven, . . ."* Father. God. Father loves me. I love father.

Difficulties did not materialize with efforts to make the concept actual until power complexes realized the inherent danger of such a belief when it had gained sufficient momentum. At the appropriate time, power confiscated the concept. Kings, emperors, aristocrats, petit bourgeois, priests, too, concealed the lust for power under a cloak proclaiming love, professed love to maintain and perpetuate their various tyrannies.

And so it has continued for hundreds of years. The grand concept of Christ's *Love One Another* has too frequently been the flowing robe of the impostor and the fraud. The extent of the perversion blots almost every page of history.

Look at today's world.

This sad planet is cluttered with loudmouths proclaiming love.

Now pinpoint an example of one who loves.

I dare you.

No. For the love of God, not that one! *Not* an example of self-love. That is the very point we are trying to arrive at: a caring for others more than self.

Laudable as it may be, love for various members of family is not suitable for example either. This love for wife, husband, child, father or mother is no more than an extension of love for self.

Concentrate on the problem. All that is needed is an example or two of those who exemplify the belief that God is Love. Surely, you can come up with at least one person on this mutilated sphere who cares more for other people than himself.

You're not trying.

Don't be silly. No churchman will do. That's their business! That's the same as being a doctor fighting disease (for money, status, and power) or a lawyer serving justice (via the labyrinths of law designed to maintain the status quo).

One example will do.

Try harder. The name of just one among billions who demonstrates by his being that he cares more for an unknown at the antipodes than for himself.

God *is* Love.

What a wondrous world this would be if even a handful lived as if they believed that.

Prince Myshkin? But Prince Myshkin is a figment of Dostoievski's fevered imagination. Anyway, you know what happened to that loony fellow, all of his friends knew that he was crazy as a bedbug.

Even though it is avoiding the issue, there is agreement that writers have always come closer to expressing the concept in their creations than have real live people in their lives. Montaigne may have come the nearest to the core of the difficulty when he wrote, "Love is not properly nor naturally in season, save in the age next unto infancy." The natural propensity to love one another has been distorted or destroyed by the time a child can utter his first bellow of hate. All the words in the world can never undo what the infant has learned from brief experience. Before he creeps, he is lost to God. To him, Love is everywhere, its music fills the air . . .

Love is just around the corner . . .

Love makes the world go 'round. . . .

Love is allied to Moon and June and Tune and Croon.

Love is a sickness, an engine, a cottage small.

Love is patriotism and marching and silken banners.

Love is a word. But the word is not with God.

According to John, love is a four letter synonym for God. Perhaps that is the whole trouble. If John had used a five-letter word or a fifteen-letter word, it may have caught on but we all know four letter words are obscene. That probably explains why man has never been in the mood for Love.

Shakespeare understood just how difficult it is:

"Men have died from time to time and worms have eaten them, but not for love." Certainly not for love.

PKF

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TOWARD A NEW LANGUAGE

When I was a boy I had no trouble recognizing pornography. The owner of the corner cigar store always had a good supply under the counter. The books themselves were decorated with naked women in various poses, and the blurbs on the book left no doubt about the content.

Today pornographic books are sold at the supermarket with abstract designs or pictures of learned men on the covers. And the blurbs are written in a pseudo-academic language that only a connoisseur of modern pornography can understand. Here are a few examples.

Blurb	*Meaning*
"A stimulating study"	a *sexually* stimulating study.
"Broadminded"	without morals.
"Widely researched"	the author has really been living it up.
"Authentic case histories"	the author reveals professional confidences.
"Extensive analysis"	the author pads his material by repeating the case histories in his own words, underlining the juicy parts.
"A medical necessity"	if you cannot get a woman (or a man) a close reading of this book will bring you to orgasm.
"well known author"	the author is well known to the police.

Victor Contoski
Madison, Wisconsin

RULES FOR GUIDANCE OF RELATIVES OF INMATES

These three final rules are reprinted, without permission, from the official stationery issued to inmates at the Ohio State Prison at Columbus. (Form # MO-3 80M-7-65-OPP Chase)

9. Relatives on their first visit must have a letter of identification from an official of the city or county in which they reside.
10. Parents, grandparents, wife, children, brothers and sisters may visit once each month on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays 12:30 P.M. to 3:20 P.M. APPROVED Friends every 30 days provided no blood relative visits in the meantime or on the same date.
11. NO VISITING PERMITTED ON SATURDAYS, SUNDAYS, AND HOLIDAYS.

Even understanding the problems involved by masses of visitors, it would not seem that the State of Ohio is particularly enchanted by the idea of its prisoners retaining very close ties with the great world outside the walls at Columbus.

The Yellow Dwarf
Middleton, USA

A STUDENT'S CREDO

That Big Bad Wolf, The American Public, has been howling at the door of American education ever since the maiden flight of Sputnik I more than eight years ago. Virtually every official spokesman and many a private citizen has proffered a theory on the education of the young and not-so-young. By and large, the most neglected individuals in the entire uproar have been the students themselves, ostensibly the subjects of all the impassioned vocalizations. No one has bothered to ask *them* what they think of the education they are receiving.

It was inevitable that the wind should finally change.

Now the Three Little Pigs, led by their cousins who live in the glass house in Berkeley, are howling back. And this is what they are saying.

The primary function of education is to develop the mind, to develop the critical capacity. If a college or university education does nothing else for a person, it should make him think. If it fails to do that, it has given him nothing.

A college student today, more than anything else, needs to think.

Today's college student walks through a chaotic world in which the innocence of other eras has been submerged beneath the awful formula: $E=MC^2$.

A college student's footsteps are dogged by population explosions, "war babies" clamoring at the gates, automation, cold war, the space race, "brush-fire" (hot) war, ever-tougher academic standards, social revolution, threatening ideologies, the draft, rising academic costs, etc.

No longer can college be regarded as a pleasant interlude between youth and a gentle and genteel adulthood.

From this time forward, the keys to the deadly serious matter of existence in today's world will be education, knowledge, and full academic and professional excellence.

The current generation of youth has inherited great-

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er challenges in a more troubled world than have been handed to any generation before it.

No other generation ever dreamed of prospects so frightening as the ones which await the youth of today's world. And yet, no other generation ever dared hope for destinies as rewarding as those which this generation, properly equipped and brought to razor-keen preparedness with the finest and most exacting of education and training, can claim as its own.

To this generation, education owes a challenge!

Education should challenge the premises its members have grown up with and blindly accepted all their lives, so that they may test their soundness and validity. Education should force the student to discover for himself, as the great philosopher Bertrand Russell suggested in his book *The Conquest Of Happiness,* whether these premises ". . . deserve the reverence which, from force of habit, he still bestows upon them."

Education should penetrate the bland surface, the unruffled exterior, the "sanctified vacuum" in which too many people (not just college students) prefer to live and die. Education should touch the deepest essence of a person's being, make him feel a great and vital stirring of mind and heart, reach some responsive chord within him. Education should make the members of today's generation angry and indignant about much of what they see of the workings of the world around them. Education should make them dissatisfied — with their own shortcomings, their own weaknesses, their own failures, their own lack of knowledge and wisdom.

And conversely, the current generation of youth owes to the world in which it grew up a response to the challenge!

The young men and women of today's world owe to the future their strength, their determination, their sense of purpose . . . and their dreams.

They owe to the future a surcease from misery, a lessening of hunger, a reprieve from hopelessness, a retreat from turmoil and conflict and the shadow of domination and destruction. To their world and their future they owe the hand extended in friendship, the shoulder turned to the labor of enduring good faith, the foot set upon the path of world-wide achievement and enlightened understanding, the mind attuned to the endless possibilities of universal progress and universal well-being.

In short, they owe to the future the spiritual abundance of a better world than that bequeathed them . . . that the children of that future may not despair, that they may not say we of this generation failed them, that they may accept the world which we create and pass on to them with gratitude and with confidence.

Jerry Lipman
Tempe, Ariz.

HOLY WRIT

"Mike (Mansfield, United States Senate Majority Leader) is a cross between Jeanette Rankin and Burton K. Wheeler, and I don't need advice from either of them," LJB complained caustically to visitors.

(Quoted from *Newsweek*)

UNREQUIRED READING

A recent news item announced the resignation of a faculty member at the University of Iowa. His name, appropriately enough, is Shagass.

The item reminded me of James Malcolm Uren who wrote a book named *Waterless Horizons.*

My secretary called to my attention the other day that G. T. Kneebone is the joint author of *Algebric Curves.*

*

Do you remember the Stendhal character who "became a wit on the strength of six or seven witticisms inherited from an uncle?"

Or Friar John's seven reasons for leaving the monastery, reason number one being, "I was thrown out."

And who has not had countless opportunities to fling at some ignoramus Francis Thompson's "How has thou merited of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot?"

*

Assuming that cosmic humor is the most satisfying and that those who laugh last are the most hearty laughers, is it not unfortunate that the ultimate situation will be that every last laugher has been progressed right out of existence with the rest of us and there will be no one left on this desolate planet to appreciate the irony of man eliminating himself?

*

One of America's most versatile, stimulating, and prolific serious men of letters reached his august seventieth birthday in 1965. Most of us tend to overlook the impressive variety of his total published works. Edmund Wilson has steadily maintained a productive flow of amazing quantity and quality. His work includes novels, poetry, criticism, non-fiction and journalistic essays of all kinds. Wilson's strength and long life as a writer are a result of his critical attitude and his diligence. Whatever he encounters is a potential subject for his observation, his analysis, his pen. An exceedingly readable writer, Wilson deserves to be reread. The problem is one of selection for a beginning. About the Iroquois? *To The Finland Station? This Room and This Gin and These Sandwiches?* Almost any of Wilson's score of titles would do. As a starter, I recommend *The Scrolls From The Dead Sea* (Oxford University Press, 1955, 121 pp.) This volume is an especially good introduction if you have never read any Edmund Wilson and think that your interest in the scrolls is non-existent.

BER

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Lament

Jay Bail

He sat on the ground in the grass with his back against a tree and he listened to the silence of the afternoon. He could hear the leaves of the trees swishing in the breeze and as he listened, there seemed to be more than a swishing and more than a breeze. Slowly, one sound at a time, changing in a merged-in sensation, there came a music that roller-coasted through his head and then came again and ran through and then slid through and then slowed down to a form he had once known. It was a waltz. It was a waltz and his head moved with the sway of it and then his body moved without moving, his feet going lightly over the grass, and it was not dark out and it was not light and it was not important. The sound of many voices talking and laughing, receding and approaching with the pattern of the waltz, came to his ears and he smiled with pleasure. He heard the crinkling sound of women's dresses as they went around. And he could smell it. He could smell her taffeta dress and her starchy white blouse as they wheeled around the room, in the one-two-three, one-two-three, of a waltz, letting the music become a part of her, letting herself become a part of the music, listening to the strains that came through the summer night, hearing her breath soft, feeling her breasts wet with movement, around and here and there, and talking with open mouth and laughing and she laughed happily looking up at him, and her eyes were wide open and she would blink and he would watch her, around and around, smelling the fragrance of her hair and her face, seeing her red hair fly around her shoulders, red hair, glittering, shining back the light. But as he watched, her hair became less red and she was not smiling now as she looked at him and the crinkling sound stopped. And then the talking and the laughter was gone and the sound of the music stopped and all the men and women turned and looked at him, looked at him and did not say anything, and then slowly the light went out and he could see her, could see her looking at him with tears in her eyes.

"Hello, David."

He looked up. "Hello, Michael," he said.

"What are you sitting here alone for?"

"I don't know. Just seemed like the thing."

"Look. I —"

David smiled and shook his head. "It's all right, Michael. You're not bothering me. Here. Sit down."

Michael was a small man of thirty-one, three years older than David. He sat down and leaned back against the tree.

David did not look at him. He looked out over the grounds, past the cement walks and the small and large plots of grass, to the Administration Building.

"Heard anything yet?" Michael said.

"No. Not yet."

"Takes them a long time, doesn't it?"

"I guess."

"Took a long time with me, I'll tell you. You remember, don't you?"

David smiled but did not look at him. "I remember how you bit your nails."

"Ahhh. A lie. A pure, unadulterated lie. However, one founded in truth. So I did bite my nails a little then. I don't bite them now."

"I'm happy for you."

Michael laughed. "I'll bet. I can just hear the celebrations in your soul."

David was smiling as he continued looking at the Administration Building. He saw the way the sun shone on the upper half of the building and the way it didn't on the rest. He watched the trees that were near the building and much taller than it. Every so often some crisp leaves would fall from the trees and they would fall to the ground and color it brown. A slight breeze would move the leaves around with a crackling sound.

"David?" Michael said.

"Yes?"

"Don't worry about it."

"I'm not worried."

"Okay. You're not worried. So stop worrying."

"All right."

"It'll work out. Really."

"I know. I hope so."

"Doctor's on your side, isn't he?"

"Yes. He said he'd do what he could." David shrugged his shoulders. "I don't know."

"Look, I'm telling you. You can trust me. If I tell you something's going to be okay, it's going to be okay."

"Sure."

"You mean you don't think I can look into the future?"

"Something like that."

"The next thing you'll be telling me is that I'm not a prophet."

"As a matter of fact, that is the next thing."

"Oho. Better watch that. Talk like that and before you know it, you'll be having delusions."

David looked at Michael and then they both laughed. They laughed for a few moments and then, slowly, it went and they sat there in silence, the breeze playing with their shirts, blowing the dead laughter from one side of his head to the other, looking out, not at the Building or the trees or the sun, but out. Hearing the laughter just rocking inside and nothing else and then it rocked and there was a smell of her mouth and her

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eyes and it was strong and came through the heat of the food, the heat rising invisible but warm, between them and yet not between them, at the table watching her order, the way she pressed her lips together just slightly when she was thinking, with a tinge of darkness at her cheekbones showing. The smell of her hair, red, and her taffeta dress and the way when she moved her head her hair flickered and the taffeta dress crinkled and when she was done ordering she looked at him and smiled, smiled through the heat and the smell of herself and then began talking but he did not listen and he saw the way the ends of her mouth moved, like cloth being folded gently, and he saw her neck, white, and she laughed at him and he looked at her breasts moving beneath her dress and she laughed and he laughed and he looked down at his meal but he was not hungry. The sounds of the other people at the other tables filled his ears and he listened and he could not understand but the noise was the heated noises and the voices were low and gentle, not with good-will, but with forgetfulness. He watched the people with the forks and glasses in their hands and most of them were smiling and those that were not were about to. As he listened to it, the sounds of their voices was deafening. He said something for no reason but he could not hear himself and he could not hear his own breathing and that frightened him and he listened hard but he could not hear his own heartbeat and then suddenly he could. There was no noise. No one was talking. He looked up and all the people at all the tables were silent as they looked at him. They were looking and they did not move and they did not say anything and over their heads the lights dimmed and he turned his head and looked at her and then slowly the lights went out and and he could see her watching him and there were tears in her eyes.

"Take it easy," Michael said.

"What?"

"Don't be so tense. Relax."

"I am relaxed."

"Sure. Like I'm a prophet."

"Something like that."

A change somewhere, a motion, made them turn their heads and look at the Administration Building. The doctor was coming out. He stopped just outside and he looked around and then he saw them and he walked towards them.

Michael got up and looked down at David. "Well, I better be going. Let me know how it goes, will you?"

David smiled also. "Okay."

"Don't worry. It'll work out. It worked out with me, didn't it?"

"Yes."

"Well — don't worry. Good luck."

"Thanks."

David watched him walk away. He watched him walk through the grass, carefully over the brown leaves that were dead, and under the tree that cast a large shadow.

"Hello, David."

He did not look at the doctor immediately. He listened for a moment to the sounds and the smell of the earth and then he slowly stood up and it was then he looked at the doctor.

"Doctor," he said, nodding his head.

The doctor smiled and looked at him and then looked away. "You like sitting here?"

"It's nice."

"I know. Looks very nice. Very restful."

"I guess it is."

"Wish I could get out more. Instead of the office."

David did not say anything.

The doctor nodded his head but did not look at David. "Well, maybe I can stick my head out of the window a few times a day. That might do it."

"That's the hard way, I guess."

"It didn't go well today, David."

"Oh."

"No. They didn't agree with me. Not in anything." He looked at David and smiled. "Not in one god-damn thing. Well, maybe a few, but it didn't matter because in the end they didn't agree."

"Nice people."

"The nicest."

"They didn't even want to see me?"

The doctor shook his head. "Nope. Wasn't important enough."

"I see."

"It's not that way all over, David. You know that."

"I know."

"It's just here. Just a few. There's a matter of room and help and — and, well, everything. Most people aren't that way, you know that."

"You mean like my brother's keeper?"

"Not quite. But in a sense."

"You know, I've been thinking. I don't think I am my brother's keeper and I know he resents it."

"How does he resent it?"

"He ignores me."

"And that's what you're doing to him."

David laughed. "That's right."

The doctor did not say anything and then he said, "Do you have a suitcase?"

"No. I don't think so. Isn't there anything I can do?"

The doctor shook his head. "They need the room. They need your vacancy."

"There's nothing?"

"No. Nothing."

"Well, that's nice. Very, very very nice."

"Get your suitcase from Jim, will you?"

"All right. When am I supposed to get out?"

"In a few hours. You have your personal belongings with Jim, don't you?"

"Yes."

"How do you feel?"

David shrugged his shoulders. "On top of the world."

"Do you feel bad?"

"Yes."

"Would you like something to quiet your nerves?"

"No."

"Sure?"

"Yes. Sure."

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"I've got to get back. There are others. Will you be all right?"

"Yes. Fine. Will I see you again?"

"Maybe. I don't know."

They shook hands then and David remembered to put a little pressure in his handshake. He saw the eyes of the doctor watching him and they were staring eyes and then David looked away.

"Sure you don't want anything, David?"

"No. Nothing."

"Well, goodbye then."

"Goodbye, Doctor."

There was a hesitation between both of them because neither had said the right words for a final parting. But it was only for a brief moment and then the doctor turned and walked back to the Administration Building.

David stood looking across the grass to the other people who were doing nothing, who were sitting beneath trees, or walking, or playing games. He watched them and then it was hard to be still and he walked through the grass to the supply room.

It was cool and warm and hot around him as he walked. He could feel the different levels striking at him from the air. Striking at him with sudden, sharp blows that rapped across his cheeks and his temples and his forehead. And each time the blow came he saw many different colors at once, revolving around a point of nonexistence, stimulated by the blows and the raps. As he walked through the grass, the grass with the sharp edges of green, the strikings became gradually less, until they settled into a monotonous pace that was not broken and that hollowed across his mind. The blows continued but they became softer and gradually he could not feel the fisted knuckles and then gradually he could feel the individual fingers and then slowly, so slowly it was too fast, he was not being beaten any more but soothed with long fingers across his forehead, long fingers aware of their own movement and moving in a methodical circle barely touching his empty skin. It was light out for the moon was full and the night was filled with many corridors of light and they were on the beach in the sand looking at the emptiness, at the lack of humanness, and her fingers were stroking his forehead as he lay with his head on her lap with closed eyes and as she stroked even her eyes were closed. And then he moved, bringing his head up, turning his body and looking at her, looking at her taffeta dress that even here crinkled away the silence, he was aware of patches of nothingness in his own mind and in a brief moment, he thought of everything he could, and then it was gone and she was smiling at him, pressing her lips slightly together and they got up and at first she walked away and then she came back and undressed in front of him. She undressed unselfconsciously and her body moved fluidly, smoothly, out of her clothes, the dress crumpled at her feet, full of sand, stepping over it. And then he undressed and he felt nothing but unselfconsciousness and he did not undress slowly and he did not undress quickly. When he was done, they looked at each other and there was no desire on his body and they went slowly into the water and the waves came and knocked them back and only then was there something there and at first they smiled and then they could not help it and they laughed at it not at each other but at the water and the night and then for a moment it was gone and then it came again and it did not go. They laughed in the water and she touched his body and he touched hers, and then they swam, close together, and when it seemed as if nothing would survive, they came back onto the beach, and nothing had died. He did not do anything to her and she did not do anything to him but their bodies hurt. They embraced in the sand and the passion came and went and came and went again and they would not let it happen. When the passion was at its height, he moved away and he could not help it and he trembled and then they lay there breathing heavily and then they got up and dressed. They dressed quietly and they did not say anything and they did not feel uncomfortable. In the moonlight, he could see her hair and her head moving with her body and her lips pressed slightly together. And then the light became dim, the moon cloudly, the waves making noises of watchfulness, and he watched her, in the taffeta dress, looking at him, and with the crash of the eyes in the distance, and just before the moon collapsed, he saw her looking at him, watching him, with tears in her eyes.

"David. How are you?"

"Jim."

"Do anything for you?"

"Yes. The doctor said that I should pick up my suitcase here. And my personals."

Jim looked at him. "You leaving?"

He smiled and nodded his head. "Yes."

"God, I'm sorry, son. Must've been quite a shock."

"Well — it was. And it wasn't. I don't know. I guess —" and then he stopped and shook his head. "I don't know."

"The board do it?"

"Yes."

"They're a bunch of old bastards anyhow. What they need is to get their minds washed out with some new ideas. But that'd be a little rough for them. Might get heart seizures."

"Anyhow, it's not really them. It's the state."

"Ah, the state. God damn state. Why the hell can't they have a little more money to run these places instead of shoving the guys out? But then again, if they had the money, they'd spend it on something else. Like highways. Yeah, that's a good one. Way I figure it, if they just didn't build any more highways, everyone'd run down everyone else, so in the end the state would have to spend it on us, huh?"

David smiled. "Prettty good logic."

"Well, maybe not the best. But at least it gets us somewhere."

"Got a suitcase?"

"Yeah. Sure." He went in back and he was gone a few minutes and then he came back. "This okay?" He put the suitcase on the counter.

"I don't know. How much do I have to pack?"

"Oh. I put the stuff already in it."

David opened the lid. There was a pair of pants

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neatly folded and a white shirt, keys, loose change. "This all I came with?"

"Yeah. I think so. You remember?"

"Not too well. No money?"

"Just the change. Yeah, and here —" he ran his hands into the suitcase and picked up a small thin paper booklet and gave it to David. "Bankbook, I think."

David took it out of the paper case and opened it up and looked at it.

"Lot of money you had," Jim said.

"Yes."

"You notice it's stamped. State's got it now. Should've hidden it from them."

David closed the booklet and put it and its container in the suitcase. He shook his head. "It didn't matter. It wasn't important."

"Still and all it was a lot of money."

He closed the lid of the suitcase. "Yes. I guess so."

"Wish I could save money like that. Five thousand, huh?"

"It wasn't mine."

"What?"

"It wasn't mine."

What do you mean?"

"My girl and I saved it up."

"Yeah?"

"For when we got married."

"Shame you don't have the money now. You going to see her?"

"Who?"

"Your girl. She going to meet you when you get out?"

He snapped the locks shut. "No. No, I'm not going to see her." He picked up the suitcase. "This everything?"

"Yeah. Think so. Look. Take it easy. Good luck."

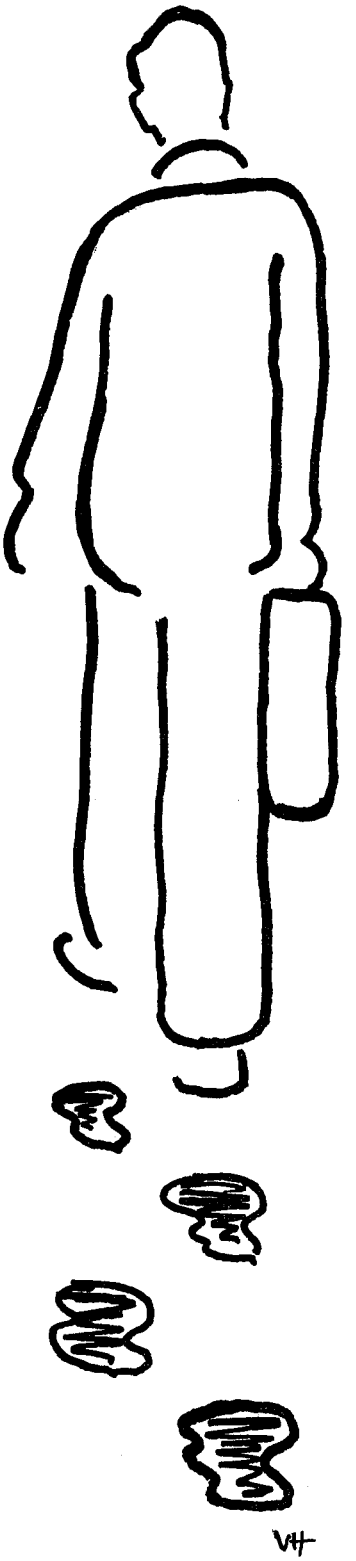
They shook hands.

"Thanks," David said. "I'll see you, Jim."

"So long, son."

Outside, walking to his cottage, he saw the men, sitting or walking, resting or playing, look at him. He saw them stop walking and look at him and he saw them put down their checkers and turn and stare at him. He could feel the look of sadness in each man's face. He walked through crowds of them and they stopped talking and they watched him. One man he had barely known got up and told him how sorry he was to hear that David was leaving. David nodded his head and smiled and then walked on. He could feel the man standing and looking at his receding back. He could feel all of them looking.

Driving back from the beach there was darkness and she lay with her head resting lightly on his shoulder and through his clothes he could feel the smoothness of her cheek and he could feel where her ear began and the hollows that ran through her ear and just the faint trace of her jaw. He could feel the smoothness of her hair as it lay on his shoulder. Pulsing with life, he could feel all of her, could touch without touching the taffeta dress, could feel it crinkling in his hands, could touch her chin and her lips, each one separately, and her nose



and her eyes, running just his fingertips over her lashes and he could feel all this although he did not move his hand and because he did not move his hand.

"It went bad, huh?" Michael said.

David nodded his head and put his suitcase on his bed. He opened the suitcase and took the pants and shirt out. He took off his own clothes, the drab gray pants and gray blouse they had given him.

"You want to talk?" Michael said.

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"Sure. Why not?"

"You don't want to, do you?"

"No. I guess not."

He could smell her hair and her eyes and her lips pressed slightly together and her taffeta dress and her breathing he could smell coming onto his shoulder the heat wafting through the air, he could smell her entire presence could smell the sounds of contentment that came from her could smell the touch of her head against his shoulder the touch of her breast against his side could smell the odor of the sight of her throat her body.

"You got enough money?" Michael said.

They were walking across the grass to the entrance. The grass, the men, the afternoon.

"What?"

"Do you have enough money?"

He could feel the sight of her in the darkness he could touch her odor he could hear her body beneath the taffeta dress could follow her breasts with his fingers, running them over the swell of loose skin that moves over the swell to the nipples firm and pointed tiny alive down the stomach hard with indrawn breath the skin soft and unyielding and yielding and down her stomach to her thighs to

The lights. What —

look out

look out

oh god oh god

oh please no god please

don't cry don't

"Easy."

"What?"

"Take it easy. You okay?"

"What?"

"It's over, isn't it?"

"Over. Over."

"Is it over?"

"I —"

"Do you know where you are?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"I — I —"

"Where?"

"I'm — leaving."

Michael smiled. "Okay. Just wanted to make sure. How do you feel?"

David did not look at anything and then he looked at the cement walk outside of the entrance.

"Feel okay?"

David smiled and looked at him. "Sure. Fine."

"Hmmm. I'll bet. Look. You have any money?"

David reached into his pants pocket and brought out fifty-seven cents in change.

"That's what I thought," Michael said. "Here. Take this."

"What do I need this for?"

"Oh, I don't know. Case you want to eat or anything."

"It's a lot of money."

"It's not so much. Anyhow I stole it from the doctor."

"You did?"

"Well, maybe not. He's too smart. When he talks to me, he keeps his hands in his pockets. It's just money I didn't let those bastards get."

"Thanks."

"Don't worry about it. It's just money. I stole it from Jim."

"Did you?"

"Well, maybe not."

They both laughed.

"Take it easy, David."

"You too, Michael."

"Still don't think I'm a prophet?"

"Nope."

Michael straightened his back and walked off a few feet and then turned around and looked coldly at David. Then he smiled. "So long."

"So long."

"Don't let them kill you."

"I won't."

Walking through the entrance, down the cement walk and then on the pavement, he listened to the air about him and the sounds his feet made. He walked along with the suitcase in his hand and soon he was passing people and he looked at them and did not look at them and he listened to them pass him, to the rush of the air that came suddenly, almost as if the earth had been twanged loudly, and he listened to it and there was no longer the sound but a something else far off. He could not hear it above footsteps. He stopped in the middle of the pavement and he looked up and out into into space and it was very far off and then it came closer and he still could not hear it and he waited and at first nothing happened and then it grew louder and it filled his mouth and his eyes and his chest and he could hear it. He could hear it.

It was a waltz.

She looked up at him, like cloth being folded gently, and she smiled.

EPITHALAMION

for Tyler

I thought I knew something
about loneliness but
you go to the stockyards

buy a pig's ear and sew
it on your couch. That, you
said, is my best friend — we

have spirited talks. Even
then I thought: a man of
such exquisite emptiness

(and you cultivated it so)
is ground for fine flowers.

James Tate

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Abraham Lincoln

1809 - 1865

and Father Abraham

William Hanchett

The April 15th anniversary of his death may seem an inappropriate time to remind Americans that their reverence for Lincoln was not shared by his contemporaries. But it is less important to mourn Lincoln's tragedy than it is to appreciate his triumph, and part of the magnificence of his triumph originates in the fact that he was not the towering figure to the people of his time that he is to us.

In 1860 he was elected President with only 39.8 per cent of the popular vote, a feeble mandate and the least ever received by a President. In 1864 he expected as late as the end of August to be defeated for reelection. Henry J. Raymond, editor of the New York *Times* and a man Lincoln referred to as his "Lieutenant-General in politics," wrote to him: "I am in active correspondence with you staunchest friends in every state, and from them all I hear but one report. The tide is setting strongly against us." Raymond believed he couldn't even carry the state of Illinois, to say nothing of New York and Pennsylvania. But the tide turned in September when Sherman captured Atlanta, and Lincoln won the election. In both of his presidential campaigns he won Illinois, but in neither of them did he carry Sangamon County, in which he lived practically all of his adult life.

The strength of the political opposition to Lincoln was of course a register of public dissatisfaction with his performance as President. Members of his own party constantly criticized him for his slowness to adopt their policies (notably the emancipation of southern slaves), and then grumbled that he got all the credit when he finally did. Members of the loyal opposition (to say nothing of the disloyal opposition) denounced him in the strongest terms, for his usurpation of legislative powers, for his suppression of civil liberties and his frequent (and to their minds unjustified) resort to military law, for his unconstitutional and distasteful confiscation of slave property, and most important of all, for his manifestly insane effort to keep the union together by force. From the point of view of these critics, Lincoln's war was futile; it could not be won. The South could defend itself against any power the North could send down. It was too big, too powerful, to be subjugated, and only subjugation to a degree virtually unknown in modern history would defeat it.

And even if by some miracle the South could be defeated, wasn't it unrealistic to think the union could be preserved by force? Former President James Buchanan said, "The fact is that our Union rests upon public opinion and can never be cemented by the blood of its citizens. . . . If it cannot live in the affections of the people, it must . . . die." Waging war against them was hardly the way to make the union live in the affections of the southern people, and therefore that man in the White House was spending blood and treasure for nothing. It was a criminal waste.

Even Lincoln's most celebrated state papers did not escape the censure or the ridicule of his opponents. Of the Gettysburg Address the Chicago *Times* reported:

> The cheek of every American must tingle with shame as he reads the silly, flat and dishwatery utterances of the man who has to be pointed out to intelligent foreigners as the President of the United States.

Such opposition was of course purely partisan in character; many Democrats simply couldn't find anything good to say about a Republican president. Many still cannot, just as many Republicans put the worst possible construction on the actions and statements of Democratic presidents. But that is the point; Lincoln was engaged in partisan politics, and the people of his time knew it even if we tend to forget it. As a politician, he was fair game to all other politicians, and the criticism of him ran (as it usually does in politics) from the well-meant and the constructive to the malicious and the hysterical.

Abraham Lincoln wasn't and isn't above criticism. If he doesn't receive much of it from his countrymen any more it is because most of them no longer think of him as Abraham Lincoln at all, but as Father Abraham, a Christ-like figure, the American national saint.

A man whose mission was revealed to him in youth, when an encounter with slavery caused the "iron to enter his soul," Father Abraham was suddenly and mys-

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teriously elevated to the presidency to fight and win a great war against slavery. His mission completed with the surrender at Appomattox, he atoned for the sins of his people with his own death a few days later. It was probably just a coincidence that the assassination occurred on Good Friday, the anniversary of the crucifixion, but who could say?

Roy P. Basler, the editor of Lincoln's *Collected Works,* describes Father Abraham as

> a kindly, pleasant old man with a humorous smile which often fades into a look of sadness. He is forever enshrined in popular memory dressed in black, with tall hat and black shawl. . . He is never though of as having any personal interest or ambition. It is only as the guardian angel of his children that he overlooks the vast arena of war and sadly smiles as the blood sinks into the thirsty sand.

The shocking tragedy of April 14, 1865, is what chiefly turned Abraham Lincoln into Father Abraham, just as the shocking tragedy of November 22, 1963, seems to have turned John F. Kennedy, an able and aggressive young man narrowly elected in 1960 and not entirely trusted by either the country or the Congress into an American Sir Galahad, the purest of the knights. (It will perhaps be necessary to remind future generations of Americans that during his lifetime not everybody considered Kennedy entitled to custody of the Holy Grail).

The transformation of Abraham Lincoln into Father Abraham is demonstrated and confirmed by the frequency with which we meet his name. Happily, few children are named Abraham, but there is one or more Lincoln schools in most of our large cities, and there are twenty-four Lincoln cities. There are twenty-five Lincoln counties, five Lincoln colleges and universities, the Lincoln Center in New York, the Lincoln Memorial, the Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, the Lincoln automobile, and innumerable Lincoln banks, stores, parks and monuments. We see Lincoln's face frequently on our pennies, less frequently on our five dollar bills. He has been pictured on at least twenty-one of our postage stamps, including the once ubiquitous four center, and on the stamps of some thirty foreign countries, including most of the new African states. Politicians of both the major political parties and of some radical groups claim Lincoln's blessings as their rightful due, and his birthday is a holiday in practically all of the United States, though conspicuously not in the states which formed the old Confederacy (except Tennessee).

The Lincoln bibliography is immense. Lincoln is by far the most written-about American, and one of the most written-about men of all time. The number of books and articles and speeches which he has inspired is awesome, and it is easily possible to read about him in all of the world's major languages and many of its minor ones. A book dealer in New York recently offered a biography in the Sioux dialect — for $200.

In 1960 the Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission published in three volumes a scholarly study begun thirty-five years before by the Abraham Lincoln Association. It takes up *Lincoln Day by Day,* and gives sources for each entry. It is unlikely that a work of similar scope has been undertaken, or even seriously considered, for any other figure in history. Naturally, entries before 1854 are not extensive, but one can learn definitively that on August 18, 1847, Lincoln purchased $ .30 worth of needles and buttons, and that on January 23, 1853, he attended a temperance lecture. The information presented for the days of his presidency is a great deal more detailed and a great deal more significant, aand all but forty-one of the over 1,500 days he spent in the White House are accounted for. In his popular *The Day Lincoln Was Shot* (1955), Jim Bishop follows him almost hour by hour through the last twenty-four. (The book was such a success that Bishop followed it up in 1957 with *The Day Christ Died* and in 1964 with, predictably, *A Day in the Life of President Kennedy.*

With all this activity it is no wonder that even Lincoln scholars have sometimes despaired of saying anything new. In 1935 the late James G. Randall, one of the foremost Lincoln experts, published an article entitled, "Has the Lincoln Theme Been Exhausted?" His conclusion was that it had not been. But in 1960 Clyde C. Walton, Director of the Illinois State Historical Society, said that an article written then under the same title "would reach a very different conclusion. . . ." And in the Preface to his invaluable *Lincoln and the Press* (1951), Robert S. Harper declared, in explanation of his own work, "One major book on Abraham Lincoln remained to be written. . . ." But these were only temporary lapses by men who knew better. A great many major books on Lincoln remain to be written; the theme is not exhausted. So long as there is an interest in history and in the mysteries of the human mind and character it is, in fact, inexhaustible.

William H. Herndon, the junior partner in the firm of Lincoln and Herndon and a close associate of Lincoln for nearly twenty-five years, wrote of him: "Mr. Lincoln was a riddle and a puzzle to his friends . . .the man was hard, very hard to understand . . . the reading and thinking public does not know him today." Herndon was writing in 1886, but his words are applicable to the present; the reading and thinking public still does not know Lincoln. Among the thousands of Lincoln titles, there are of course many good ones. But an unfortunate law operates in the field of Lincolniana: the bad books, the trashy books, the sentimental books, the hero-worshipping books, tend to out-sell the good ones, so that the public knows not Lincoln but only Father Abraham.

We all know Father Abraham and we all love him and feel that we understand him (and that he understands us). Abraham Lincoln, on the other hand, is much more difficult, by all odds the most difficult figure in American history. Franklin, Jefferson, Wilson, the Roosevelts, were many-sided and learned men, but perhaps not very complex men. Lincoln was not many-sided and not learned but he was very complex.

Nobody recognized his complexity more than those who knew him. Herndon wrote:

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> Lincoln was a curious, wonderful, mysterious man, incomprehensible by the mass of men. I studied Mr. Lincoln for twenty-five years, inside and outside. He was a man of opposites, of terrible contrasts. One man today would see Lincoln in one states and the man would say this was Lincoln. Tomorrow this same man would see Lincoln in a totaally different state and say this was *not* Lincoln, and yet it was . . .

Alexander McClure, a newspaperman who saw him frequently:

> Those who have spoken most confidently of their knowledge of his personal qualities are, as a rule, those who saw least of them below the surface. He might have been seen every day during his Presidential term without ever reaching the distinctive qualities which animated and guided him, and thus hundreds of writers have assumed that they understood him when they had never seen the inner inspirations of the man at all. He was a stranger to deceit, incapable of dissembling: seemed to be the frankest and freest of conversationalists, and yet few understood him even reasonably well, and none but Lincoln thoroughly understood Lincoln.

And Josiah G. Holland, whose 1866 biography was one of the first to hit the market after Lincoln's death:

> The writer has conversed with multitudes of men who claimed to know Mr. Lincoln intimately; yet there are not two of the whole number who agree in their estimate of him. The fact was that he rarely showed more than one aspect of himself to one man. He opened himself to men in different directions.

If the man himself is complex and difficult to understand, so too is his record as President; his greatness has been more often proclaimed than explained. Various writers have presented him as a dedicated anti-slavery leader, "almost a pioneer abolitionist," and as a politician whose conversion to the principles of Republicanism was tardy and opportunistic; as the Great Emancipator and friend of the Negro race, and as a southern white supremist who was reluctantly forced by circumstances to free the slaves; as the leader needed since Jackson's day who had the courage to face up to the nation's crisis of moral decision, and as a man who failed to appreciate the true nature of the crisis, overestimated the strength of southern unionism, and blindly refused to make the concessions which could have avoided war; as the champion of democracy, and as a dictator who disregarded the Constitution and ruthlessly trampled upon civil liberties; as the savior of the union and the apostle of nationalism, and as the enemy of states rights and the federal principle; as the political genius who kept the divided factions of the North behind the war effort, and as a classical Whig in the White House, who led neither Congress nor his own party; as an advanced military strategist who appreciated before his generals the impact of railroads, the telegraph, conscription, and improved weapons upon the nature and conduct of war, and as an amateur whose meddling in military affairs prolonged the fighting and cost the lives of thousands of men; as the greatest of all Americans, and as an over-rated mediocrity who is considered great only because he was assassinated at the psychologically right moment.

There are no such conflicts and contradictions in the character and public services of Father Abraham.

But does it really matter? Is there any good reason why Abraham Lincoln should be brought out from the shadow of Father Abraham? There is indeed, for otherwise it is impossible to understand the Civil War, and the Civil War, despite the centennial celebrations (which presented it is as non-controversial and merely picturesque), is still the most important event in American history. Abraham Lincoln won that war; Father Abraham never could have.

Abraham Lincoln adopted the policy of freezing the slaves of the Confederacy after seventeen months of bloody fighting, by which time most people in the North (but by no means all) were willing to accept it as "fit and necessary war measure." But as a man whose heart bled for the slaves, who had, indeed, dedicated his life to the single goal of freeing them, Father Abraham would have issued an Emancipation Proclamation immediately after Fort Sumter, if not immediately after his inauguration. Such an action would have lost the administration the support of many of those still loyal to it. As yet unconvinced of the necessity of emancipation, a very large percentage of the men of the North would have refused to fight and die for southern Negroes, for whom, after all, they had no special affection. Furthermore, Father Abraham's aggressive and premature Proclamation would have driven all fifteen of the slave states into a defensive union so strong that military action against it would have been out of the question. By adroit maneuvers and the careful balancing of pressures and counter-pressures, Abraham Lincoln was able to keep four slave states — without much he could not have won the war — loyal to the United States.

Father Abraham was a softy, a man who shrank from bloodshed and pardoned whole armies of deserters and sleeping sentries. As a man who never thought of the Confederates as the enemies of his country but as his countrymen still, he would not think of causing them any unnecessary suffering. Like many of his early generals, he would fight the southern armies exclusively and not too relentlessly, capture southern cities without undue damage to private property, and observe the traditional rules of war regarding blockades, the exchange of prisoners, and trade in non-contraband goods.

The North could not have won Father Abraham's limited war; only in a total, all-out war could its superiority of manpower and natural resources become the decisive factor. Before any of his generals, Abraham Lincoln recognized that the only way to defeat the South was to crush it, not just to defeat the southern armies but to destroy them and the ability and will to raise new armies. Under his leadership and to the horror of the South, which pretended adherence to the chivalric code, the old rules of war were thrown out. Sherman didn't observe them on his march from Atlanta to the sea and northward through the Carolinas. Sheridan didn't observe them when he destroyed the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. Grant and Lincoln didn't observe them when they decided not to exchange prisoners of war (they could afford the loss of men better than the Confederates could), or when (for the first time in modern history) they made medicine contraband of war, or

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THE FANS

In summer, the sound of the large window
Fans that circulate the heat
Vibrates our bodies and we unwind.

The whirring propeller that stirs the air
Around one calms the currents inside.
I almost sleep in my hard chair,

As though beneath the huge, black blades
That swung above my head as a child,
Circling a pipe from the ceiling until

I feel a draft from where there is
No skylight; and I look up as though
In the shops of childhood's small town

And see a long fluorescent tube
As bright as the street where horses were hitched
To wagons beside old cars in shades.

A fly walks up the naked light.
As a dust cloud comes from the end of town.
The barber, the druggist—through the back door.

That one street movie set becomes
Africa, Asia, and Arabia while
The French and English in khaki shorts

Are ordering cokes, as the black fans
Turn slowly overhead, dissolving
Them and the day and the whole summer.

I sit here hypnotized, my head
Spinning in the shrivelling heat, my will,
Suspended, struggling to stay awake.

I hold to the present, although I hear
The blacksmith of the thirties pounding
An anvil, disturbing the fading curtain

With a rhythm that neither begins nor ceases.
In his open shed, where he is standing
By an open forge, the huddled summers

Generate all of the world's factories,
Hung with the huge fans, those rimless
Wheels that turn around themselves.

They draw their currents of distilled matter
From the veins of pure fire, each fan
Waiting to be replaced by the smooth

Almost silent hum of the air
Conditioners and finally a cool silence—
With the engine in the basement or the backyard.

Van K. Brock

when they freed and armed a slave population and turned it against its masters. Abraham Lincoln did what Father Abraham could not have done. He introduced his countrymen to a new kind of war — total war, the only kind the North could win.

Both Abraham Lincoln and Father Abraham were scrupulously honest, but they would have reacted in different ways to dishonesty. One imagines Father Abraham quickly and completely dissociating himself from a subordinate who dipped too often into the national treasury, or permitted his friends to. Abraham Lincoln dealt with his first Secretary of War, Simon Cameron, a leader of the Republican party in Pennsylvania and a powerfuul figure whose support was essential, less self-righteously.

Cameron mishandled the mobilization program, wasted millions of dollars of government money, surrounded himself with graft and grafters, and demonstrated a fondness for dispatching troops over a railroad in which he had an interest even when shorter and cheaper lines were available. An investigation by Congress of one incident resulted in an official censure by the House of Representatives. Finally the time came when Lincoln had to get rid of him. But Lincoln dropped him gently. In addition to sending to Congress a message in which he accepted full responsibility for the action for which the Secretary had been censured, he wrote Cameron this public letter:

> I am now able to gratify your wish [to resign from the cabinet], and at the same time evince my personal regard for you and my confidence in your ability, patriotism, and fidelity to public trust.
> I therefore tender to your acceptance . . . the post of Minister to Russia [a prestigious position then as now]. Should you accept it, you will bear with you the assurance of my undiminished confidence, of my affectionate esteem, and of my sure expectation that . . . you will be able to render services to your country not less important than those you could render at home.
> Very sincerely, your friend.

Father Abraham would have shrunk from such hypocrisy. Indeed, he would have shrunk from much that Lincoln did, would have preferred losing the war to winning it Lincoln's way. He was too uncompromisingly anti-slavery to free some of the slaves and not others. (For reasons Father Abraham might not have found persuasive, Lincoln freed the slaves of the Confederacy, over whom he had no control, but not those within Union lines, over whom he did have control.) Father Abraham was too pure to use the patronage and other powers of his office to pressure Congressmen, too virtuous to ask a general to furlough home certain troops so they could vote in an important election, too humble to believe that the Democrats had to be defeated in 1864 because only he himself could save the union. Father Abraham would have bungled the war, botched it. To pretend otherwise is to abandon any rational explanation of the North's victory, and to deprive the war itself of meaning. Father Abraham is to Abraham Lincoln what the centennial reenactments of battles were to the real ones: phony, pointless, and sentimental.

Father Abraham is a religious figure, and better and truer embodiments of the virtues he represents are found in all of our churches. But Lincoln was a political figure. "Politics were his Heaven," wrote Herndon. If they hadn't been, if Lincoln had not been a master of American partisan politics, he could never have risen to that pinnacle of Churchillian statesmanship which saved his country and kept it on the road to greatness.

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Murphy in Missouri

Mark Costello

It's 1 AM on Sunday night, first day of September. Murphy sit sat poolside in a blacked out *Holiday Inn* in Columbia, Missouri. In room 126 he has a son and a wife. In North East Iowa he has a girl friend. In Manhattan, Kansas, he has a new job. In his right hand he has a half-emptied pint of tequila.

Murphy drinks because he doesn't know what else to do. If he didn't love his family, he would go in and tell them that he was leaving, that they would never see him again. If he didn't love Annie, he would go in and sleep with his smart wife, he would mount her and ready them both to drive non-stop to smiling Manhattan tomorrow.

As it is, he can do neither. So he drinks and thinks it over; he remembers Annie and a summer of playing her sweet and tentative ass off the six year old question of his marriage.

He first saw her in a classroom that stunk with worry, that glittered with dandruff and florescene. She stood against a blackboard with a typed paper in her hand and explained to Murphy, her teacher, why she hadn't gotten her bibliography in on time.

Three months later, stuffed with pizza and tequila, he leaned under the hot, canned dome of a phone booth, jammed the receiver into his cheek for support, dialed her number and told her he loved her.

It took him seven months to arm that lie. By then his favorite trick was to lay a big, vermilion ear against her ribs and whisper, "Annie I love you," listening quietly as the sense of it boomed against the chili-scorched roof of his mouth, the steaming ceilings of his trumpeting marriage. She was from Des Moines and her blouses were made of oxford cloth and paid for by her father. Her auburn hair roared over her bare shoulders, and she didn't believe a word Murphy said. But above him her milky teeth shone against the wide blue inane of Iowa in June; they tickled each other and galloped through dandelions. On the morning of her last exam, with his fingertips still puckered from doing the breakfast dishes, Murphy presented her with big red beads from Nigeria.

At home that afternoon, with his integral wife smoking the small cigars he foisted off on her, feckless Murphy sat with his hands in a swoon and read the letter that confirmed his fat assistant professorship in Kansas come September. He stuffed his hands in his pocket and pretended to help her budget for the new year that faced them. They should have had hatchets in their hands, doors should have been slamming, Kansas should have gone away. But it wouldn't, so they told each other how much it would cost, how much they could spend on it. He poured tequila into a Mason jar, and as he tipped it up, he saw his wife's reflection in the glass-topped kitchen table. She looked postponed and hollow-eyed.

But Murphy wasn't quite willing to let it go at that. Fervid with *Jose Cuervo* and his four year old son screaming around his knees like a delphic gnat he would give his life for, he chose that moment to ask himself why bright Annie would fool with a married man like him. Because it was a question he couldn't afford to ask himself, his timing was perfect. He had no more gotten it into his mind than his son screamed: "Swing me!"

He did. And the question of Annie fit his son's grin with such centripetal occlusion, Murphy shouted with joy, his fingers strummed his son's ribs with the impunity of the loon under the penalty of death.

Annie called him early the next morning to tell him that she had gotten an "A" in Spanish. Murphy burst out of his sulphuric office with a half-gallon of Rose wine in a paper bag. The ineluctable inscape of staggering Iowa hung over the back of their necks; crows hopped between the blue-black furrows of beanfields, green and yellow tractors were bent over backward against opal spumes of cloud. Annie caught him by the hand and led him to the banks of the gurgling, minnow-crowded Coon River.

There she sat in her wine skirt with her feet together and her knees drawn up, while the river made a demanding racket dragging itself southward. He looked down at her ankles shaved the same color as his own overwrought cheeks and he didn't want her to marry anyone else. The air above the river was cataleptic with swallows; he wanted to snatch one down and dry his hands on it.

Instead he said, "Annie I love you," and his assertion was contained neither by his mouth nor his marriage nor the vast blue sky over his head. It flew off like a blasphemy that was both irretractable and air-conditioned. Sweat trickled down his ribs and because he had said it once too often already, he told her again that he loved her and put his hands on her breasts.

When he got home that afternoon, his wife was chewing on the eraser of a yellow pencil and wincing at the black cigar smoke that wreathed her beautiful, Bohunk face. She stood up and asked him *please* to look for a summer construction job first thing Monday morning. He made a muscle, his son felt how hard it was, and his wife presented him with the week's grocery list. He bowed and clicked his heels when he took it and his wife walked away from him. She had anxiety attacks

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and couldn't breathe when she turned a super-market aisle that turned away from home. So Murphy never asked her to grocery shop for herself anymore.

The farmhouse he borrowed that last Sunday had a lawnful of willows that flicked and sizzled with a nuptial greenery. The razor grass bowed and whispered as he passed with Annie's tremulous arm in his hand. Big dolt Murphy looked up at the blowing sky and dreamed they had been wed by sly proxy, in windy and carnation-strewn Des Moines . . .

Strange mortgage. Tolling quiet. Tenant Murphy was playing house in hell again. Annie's hair pins glittered against the sheet, her hair fanned out over the pillow.

Next to the bed there was a straight-backed chair. A package of rubbers was nailed to it with a crooked spike of sunlight.

At 6 AM on Monday morning Murphy was sitting in the Labor Hall, waist-deep in spittoons and old *American Legion* magazines, waiting for a summer job. Half an hour later he lifted a forty-pound cement block with a bang to the floor and the examination of his conscience began.

He had failed in the farmhouse with Annie and now with the tin Iowa sun clattering against the slick, blinding limestone above him, he could admit it. Between Annie's uplifted knees he had gone soft as a night crawler, and now his teeth were glittering in the sun, there was sweat in his eyes, the dank palms of his hands were being cut on the sharp edges of the cement block, but he was picking them up and putting them down and he had found a place that was proper to his rage and humiliation.

Whoopee. He worked with an astounded old chicken hawk name of Fred who had the ears of a bat way up the back of his neck. Fred screamed around with permanent saliva caked on his faded mouth and didn't remind Murphy in the least of pressing his closed eyes against Annie's breasts—every sighing, willing surface of her body was a promise that had been made to him so long ago that Murphy couldn't now spoil it with his softness. He pressed against her, he whispered that he loved her, and each time he said it, he got in softer and softer debt to her and whole house with pigeons stuttering and clucking across the attic above them so merrily.

Oh no old Fred was a regular running heart attack with the arms of a bat, too. All tendons and pale bones with no bicep at all. Yet with his piebald pigeon's face concave with pain, he'd get on his tip toes and lead Murphy into terrible slick blue corners and tell him to hand blocks up to him, when from the floor over head the red acetylene popcorn of the welder's torches was bursting and sizzling on the concrete deck around them. But Fred's skin didn't seem to burn and he didn't seem to care about the mean rubies falling on his shoulders and on the tips of his kitty-kat ears. So Murphy would cringe and lift and it didn't remind him at all of pressing against Annie in that squeaking beige sink of a bed when after awhile he refused to open his eyes and began to hears his son running through the rooms downstairs. He built to such a shrieking momentum, Murphy *knew* he was going to fall against the stove or the bathtub or the glass-topped coffee table and really get hurt. Why didn't his flippant, coffee-sipping mother stop them, why was she torturing him this way? Finally in the empty corridors and rooms of his skull Murphy screamed: "You stop running do you hear your *father?*" But he didn't stop running.

And old Fred didn't either. One afternoon in his hurry he almost nudged Murphy off the hoist they were unloading on the fourth floor. Murphy cursed the deck Fred walked on and set a block down so hard on a scaffold, it broke in half. Fred looked at him and said, "Boy, I believe you would fuck up a wet dream if you got the chance." Foreshortened, profane, apt, the accusation was as unforgettable as it was unforgiveable. Murphy was almost thirty years and there was nothing further from a wet dream than magnificent and tentative Annie. So he took Fred's pale arm and shook it. He said, "You don't know what you're talking about old man. You better shut your mouth."

As he looked into Fred's watery, unflinching eyes, Murphy tried to remember what Annie looked like. When he couldn't, he smashed his ungloved fist against a concrete wall and cursed until he was determined to see her again even sooner than he had promised.

Later that afternoon Fred hurt his back lifting a slab of limestone and Murphy bought a crazy, cortisone-colored hard hat from the foreman and smoked three black cigars.

When he got home after dark his wife was sitting in the bathtub, her head hung down and her hair streaming into rings of dead water. Murphy reeked of tequila and his nose was stuffed with concrete dust. When he bent over and asked her what was the matter, she said, "Ahhh," three times.

Three days later she was stretched out on an operating table, having a tumor taken off her bladder.

Post operative hugs and paddy-cake. Murphy hung around the dis-infected pedestal of his wife's bed as nice and fuddled as a new father. Both of her roommates were old ladies with cancer and sons killed in the Korean war. Their distraught daughters would rush in from time to time and try to keep the old ladies in bed while they reported the fatal illness of other and still younger daughters in Texas and Detroit.

Outside, the big purple storm clouds piled up, draped rainwater like depraved rayon nightgowns over the

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windows and Murphy was sure he would not work the next day.

So he said to his wife: "Sure I'll work tomorrow. I'm in with the foreman, I'll work inside. He knows I need the money."

That afternoon they held hands and talked about how they'd been treating each other. He brought his wife chocolate malteds and they promised to try to help and love each other in spite of their complications and problems. Her urine was syphening into a plastic bag at the side of the bed, and she seemed brave and distinct in her new madras bathrobe. Time and again he squeezed her hand and told her that the biopsy would come back from the lab negative. Of course the tumor couldn't be cancerous. She shouldn't even consider it. She was much too young.

His kissed his wife's hand at four Sunday afternoon, called Annie from the phone booth in the lobby of the hospital and told her he was on his way. 10 minutes later he took off for Des Moines through squalls of blue Iowa rain.

What would happen if one of them hit him head on? Again and again to the drowsy, imperial rhythm of his deranged windshield wipers, Murphy tried to consider the impact of a 60-ton, 70 mile an hour semi-trailer truck on the sweet frame of his face and Chevrolet. Each time he thought of it, the word "impact" was driven with all of its anthropomorphic pat-pat right through his soft brown eyes and wound up amid pulverized glass and grillwork a mile back down the road where no new word for the indestructability of matter would rise out of his aghast corpse and edify the onlookers.

That morbidity and his squacking, carbon-belching Chevrolet got him into Des Moines, but not into Annie. She came knocking three times at his door, and when he kissed her and let her in, Murphy got a requisite look at the motel parking lot.

It was rife with wives on brave vacations. Bold fathers stood on hairy tip toes unloading the luggage racks of side-swiped station wagons from Minnesota, Utah, and Nebraska. Skinny sons in willing t-shirts carried suitcases with arms drawn and shoulder sockets squeaking. Flamingo daughters in shorts and pin curls carried folding cots and large, stained sackfuls of hamburgers to go. From dad on down they deserved this vacation, and now with the sun setting they could salivate and co-operate like troops of blood-line saints with twilight in their comfortable, death-risking eyes.

Murphy slammed the door, stripped Annie and led her into the bed. But there, within the rehearsed fork of her knees, he felt a width and consent that were crucial. She was giving him his second chance and as he knelt and nibbled on her thighs, he could taste the lies he had told his wife about the remoteness of work tomorrow and cancer in a couple of days. The were lies that could be annuled inside Annie alone, not between the sheets or on the highway.

Murphy lay a vigilant cheek on Annie's belly and tried to listen to the brave logic of his right middle finger as it moved in and out of her. But he could hear or feel nothing more than the knuckles and jab of a virtuosity that Annie had felt before.

Cursing, he reached to the night stand, ripped open a package of rubbers, rolled one on, pushing himself against her, and his impotency, the flamboyant and sheathed *Tootsie Roll* of his rage, hacked softly against Annie and there was no place to be but inside her.

Cringing within that certainty Murphy said, "I want to be in you Annie," and each time he repeated his words, he was certain only that his softness was rubbing his wife's tumor wrong, that if he kept it up that tumor would bloom and flower in the lab and on her bladder and that despite the 150 heroic miles he had driven, he could still kill his wife by soft proxy, all the way from diaphonous and dare-devil Des Moines.

Scared Murphy threw himself off her and said, "Annie this is no good. We're going to have to wait a minute."

More shrill than the clapboard farmhouse of his first failure, that plea squatted on his chest and screamed so loud for an explanation, Murphy knew he couldn't give it. So he touched her cheek and told Annie he was sorry.

With nuptial gravity she turned and said, "It's all right. I understand."

Because he was certain she didn't, he sat up on one elbow and asked her what she understood.

"I understand that you think I'm a child. A little girl you can't be responsible for."

Under the fragrant auspices of her breasts and diminution, Murphy kissed and corrected her until he had time to decide why they had to wait a minute. Then he reached up, swiped the ripped package of rubbers off the night stand and said: "This is why we have to wait a minute. I hate these things. They come between us, make us temporary and craven."

Ducking under his speech, he buried his face in Annie's shoulder and she asked him to look up at her. When he didn't she said: "You don't want to make me pregnant do you?"

Murphy shook his head. "No I don't. I want to make decent love to you though. And I can't with one of these on."

In the space between her reply and her heaving shoulder blades, Murphy thought about making Annie preg-

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nant. He thought about ripping the rubber off and pinning her on the banks of the loud Coon River. She would squirm whispering: "You don't want to make me pregnant do you?" and Murphy would say: "Yes I want to make you pregnant," and she'd rasp: "All right go ahead then, oh go ahead." With a thrust and shutter Murphy would obey her order, engender a fix that he couldn't get out of, strike a blow that would devastate his wife and his marriage, that would keep him out of Kansas and his future there forever.

Just loud enough to hear himself think, Murphy began to whisper: "Change my life Annie, change my life." He whispered it until he began to feel hard and sad about the distance that would always lay between what Annie could give and what he could take from her for the first time in her moist virgin's life.

For the first time in either of their lives, sheathed and steady Murphy moved into Annie and her cry was contained by the valved advocacy of his opened mouth and thrusting tongue.

Humility and gratitude. He moved up on her, deeper into her, and the difference between Annie and his wife was thunderstruck, diametric and clutching; the young and moist decimals of her vagina gripped him and Murphy went as deep as Annie did. Reaching that end, he withdrew and found it again and again until he wanted to scream for the pelvic cinch and kiss she gave him.

When she began to moan "Oh", Murphy felt infinitely penetrant, as if by length alone he could drive back and undo every tumor, marriage or woman he had ever made before her.

Tears in the bone. He took Annie's face in his hands and saw his dream skull in hers. He kissed her eyesockets and like a spiral of splinters, swallows and famine, his spine took hold of hers and wouldn't let go short of fusion. He looked at her and she told him that she loved him.

Two days and 150 miles later his wife didn't have cancer and all summer long Murphy lifted concrete blocks onto ringing scaffolding and paid Annie's bus fare to come see him.

Broad Sunday afternoons they lay under a friend's skylight, in a friend's low bed, breathed the air-conditioning, ate dexamyl and drank tequila. While pigeons wheeled over the back of his head, Murphy pulled his mouth off Annie's mouth and told her that he loved her, that he wanted to *keep on* loving her, that he didn't want to stop just to go to Kansas and to pieces with no one out there to love and live for.

Monday mornings dawned resonant with jack-hammers and disbelief. Full of his wife's bacon, eggs and blueberry pie, stout Murphy would lean and yawn in the cool caves of the unfinished fourth floor. He'd smoke a cigar and look down on razor-backed Fred scurrying in the muddy arroyo below him, racing amid the ghostly boa constrictors the tires of the wheelbarrows left behind. Then the big neuralgia of the air-compressors would rack on and Murphy could feel, but couldn't believe the waltz of his and Annie's skeletons as they fleshed and coalesced while they screamed "love" and the Sunday sun sank to the squack of the bed, faded to the blue hiss of her bus leaving for Des Moines.

Now Murphy stands in the *Holiday Inn* and looks out over the suitcases and luggage racks of the republic. He thinks of his last desperate promises to take Annie to Mexico. He thinks of a brave new station wagon with her fragrant combs and sun glasses spread across the top of dashboard. Roaring semi-trailer trucks might blare their horns and bright lights at them, but behind the tinted glass, amid the air-conditioning, she would be asleep with her head on Murphy's lap, and he would stroke moist wisps of hair from the corners of her mouth and together they would drive to that serene southern border in less than two days.

Annie.

Murphy raises the pint of tequila to his lips and his anger is as amnesiac as it is drunken. He lowers the bottle, puts the tips of his fingers to his chin, but no matter how quietly he stands, he cannot remember what she looks like.

That loss of memory turns him on his heel. With raw tequila sloshing on the toes of his shoes, he heads toward room 126 and his hands remember yesterday. At first he sat on the front porch, drank beer, jiggled his son on his knees and declined his wife's invitation to help the truck driver load the furniture onto the moving van. But then the driver offered him $2.50 an hour and now Murphy can feel the sharp wrought iron chairs and slick refrigerator in his hands and would like to raise them over his head and smash them through the motel door. He stops in front of it and in his 2 AM guts he can feel that moving van whining with inexorable headlights and tires toward Kansas and he would like to throw out a fist or a ribcage to stop it.

He fits the key into the bright red door of room 126, pushes and thinks he can't do it. He can't go to Kansas just to prove that he can't take Kansas, just to break down under that truck and that intricate and coronary load of furniture.

The stage, the altar. Murphy steps onto the motel room carpet, drinks and looks. He knows that with a single shout he could have the lights on, he could have the floor strewn with shredded *Kleenex* and his wife propped up and rocking behind devastated eyes moaning: "You can't be serious. A nineteen year old girl. Have you gone mad? You can't leave us this way. We're your family."

And she would be right and his son would be sitting up rubbing the sleep and melodrama out of his eyes and Murphy can't do that to either of them. So while his family sleeps, he drinks and wanders in their midst, looking at them.

He stops first in front of his wife who lies curled as if she were expecting her pillow at any moment to sputter and catch fire. Murphy smoothes her hair and lifts the blanket to her hand. When she clutches it to her throat, he knows he had no right to touch her. Drinking, he moves to his son who sleeps as if his father had never driven to Des Moines.

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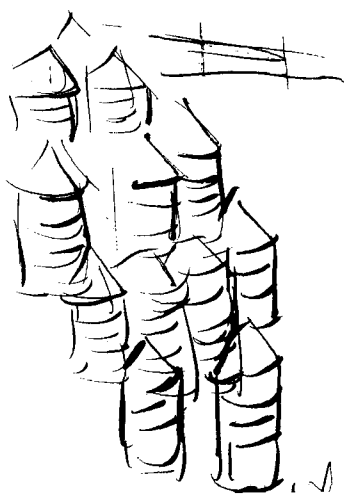
Because it is the closest he can now come to Annie, Murphy must caress and displace that lie. Putting down his bottle of tequila, he sweeps up his sleeping son, steals out the door and down the steps. He stops at poolside, holding him against both suicide and abductions, under the necessary and overwrought dome of the Missouri stars.

Rememering the roll of Annie below him, Murphy whispers, "I love you Matthew, boy," and his son sleeps as if that assertion need never have been made.

Making the most he can of his grip and judgment, Murphy walks to the edge of the pool and stares at the sign: *Deep End.* And because he doesn't need to be reminded, he looks into the water and is reminded of driving to Des Moines: the wobbly yellow squabbles of



Fred and his wife's cancerous roomates as they hopped from the back seat to the front and twisted the rear view mirror and stared into each other's throats; the rain hitting the car like mean sheets filled with lightning and the fluted grills of semi-trucks; his wife's biopsy hanging like an ulcerous albatross around his neck. Then the sky cracking open and Des Moines going diaphonous with rainbows, tequila and Annie in full wine regalia knocking at his door and in bed her thighs opening exactly as wide as the question of his wife's cancer until they finally closed on him and annulled everything and one that came before them in a benign fusion of pink flesh and flaring bone, white flesh and fusing bone.

Now he opens his eyes, presses his son's sweet skull against his own, and because Murphy must put the deep end of his memory in words, he whispers: "Matthew boy, it will never be that way again."

Holding cheekbone against cheekbone, he feels the slow marrow of his son's sleep growing between himself and Annie. But as he holds him there so surely above the water, there is nothing short of murder that he can do about it.

Murphy turns from the pool, and because there is something mean and desperate in him that wants his wife to wake and find them gone, he hurries with his son toward darkened room 126.

Alice in Adland

BLONDE, 22, ROMANTIC, AFFECTIONATE, GOOD FIGURE, FOND OF ANIMALS AND THE OUTDOORS, WISHES TO MEET SERIOUS YOUNG MAN WITH MEANS.

MIDDLE-AGED BUSINESSMAN, YOUNG AT HEART, WOULD LIKE TO CONTACT REFINED CULTURED LADY, NO OBJECTION ONE CHILD.

How often have you read advertisements such as these in the columns of the tabloid newspapers? And how often have you wondered whether anyone ever answers them and, if so, who?

I decided to find out by sending in an advertisement myself. **TALL SLIM BRUNETTE, 25, ARTISTIC,** I wrote, **WOULD LIKE TO MEET OR WRITE TO ANYONE WITH UNUSUAL INTERESTS.**

Seventy men and two women replied. They ranged in age from twenty-one to fifty-five, with an average of thirty-two. They included five who operated their own business, two executives, two "professional men", two "businessmen", two engineers, two travelling salesmen, a photographer, a pilot, a secretary, a geology student, a showman, a crane operator, a miner, and a hotel manager. Most were American or Canadian, but one was Irish, three European, one Asian and one Eurasian. Many claimed to have travelled extensively, to possess an excellent sense of humor, and to be highly educated and cultured (six college graduates). Nineteen said they were good-looking, while others described themselves as gentle, sensitive, considerate, imaginative, broadminded, uninhibited, idealistic, romantic, and passionate. And they were simply brimming wth unusual interests. For instance:

*

"I am in my early thirties, without physical defects, and a businessman. Some time ago, however, I became interested in transvestitism and now enjoy wearing on occasion female clothes, high heels, etc. I hasten to assure you, though, I am perfectly normal in every respect."

*

"I am intelligent, rather idealistic, have a humorous personality, am congenial and adaptable to the environment and people in any given social circumstance or association. I am what you might call "an unqualified philosopher", but don't let that scare you."

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"Hi there, tall slim brunette 25 artistic! That description fits me also, but although I'm not slim, I am not fat. I'm a 6 ft., 175 lb. white male with good build and considered good-looking. I've been learning art since I was four and am a largely self-taught knitter. I've designed and created ladies' fashions, sports car bodies, homes, neon signs, window displays, working models, business cards, letterheads, shoes, mannequins, etc., when I've had the spare time, *but* you see, I have to make a buck, so I have to work at something other than art.

*

"I am a young, healthy, well-mannered executive with a young shapely Continental girlfriend. We are both educated, cultured and very much inclined to unusual, uninhibited good times. I am free to travel or to entertain in my apartment. It would also be possible to entertain as a single or couple in the afternoon or in the evening. You can depend on absolute confidnce and of course the same would be expected in return. No subject is too exotic, erotic or unusual."

*

"Dear Little Lady, I am taking the Pleasure to send you this letter today. I am white, late 40, 200 lbs French Canadian. Occupation miner. Excuse my writing Please my education is poor But good hearted I won't write to long the first time but good one on the second promise. I also promise you satisfaction guarantee. I will close my letter now for the first one waiting for your little heart see what he as to say."

*

"My interests are unusual, I am sure. I just gave the University of Ontario 45 live snakes. Plus 18 snakes that died on me this season that I'd pickled in formalin. I'm trying to get four buffaloes from Calgary, Alta. for the winter fair coming up soon. I'm framing a Girlie-show and two other shows for the 1966 season. I'm 50 years old, my friends swear I look 35-38 years. No grey hair. All my own teeth, very muscular (set my own tent up and tear it down myself when my help get drunk). Very good sense of humor. (Could make Ed Sullivan's if I could book my act on TV). Drink beer, don't care too much for hard stuff, enthusiastic at sack-time, very affectionate."

*

"I am currently a senior account executive with an advertising agency and have been a writer, layout man and critic, as well as having been a professional musician for some six years. Age . . . thirty-five. I hope that doesn't seem old to you. I have young ideas and lots of enthusiasm. I am married too; however, I have a busy and ambitious wife whose interests all too frequently conflict rather than support my own.

"If you're wanting a real swinging time for a couple of days, I'm your guy."

*

"I am fascinated by the exotic, the erotic, the neurotic, the despotic. I have played in jazz bands with people like Mugsy Spanier and Jack Teagarden; I have argued with fanatics in Chicago's "Bughouse Square"; I have belonged to a nudist club; I have studied religion with a Dominican friar; I have gone to bed with negresses; I have done social work and have led a Boy Scout troop. . . . And I am outwardly not very different from anyone else you may know; and perhaps there are many who are far more complex."

*

"My name is Alf and I am 30 years of age. I am 6 ft. tall and not too hard to look at. I have to admit, as do you, that my interests are more or less exotic. However, I am married and my wife is quite lost to the finer things in life. As my marital status prevents contact in the usual way, I would like to make a suggestion. If you would be kind enough to place an ad in the Daily Star's personal column, I will contact you right away. Your ad would read, 'ALF PLEASE PHONE CHARLIE AT — your phone number.' I would suggest you reverse your number to avoid crank calls."

*

"I hope I don't sound conceited, because I'm not, but only want to give the facts as they are. I am a beautiful male, excitingly well endowed, but also have a very feminine figure — hips, legs, etc. and am unusually buxom for a male. All this has made life most embarrassing on occasion, but exciting for me, and I thrill to talking about it to someone who may be interested, as I hope you are. As a male, I am fascinated by women, and excited by their erotic thoughts both about men and other women. I also love to dress as a female myself and thrill to the experience of feeling and thinking like a woman. I look completely feminine when made up, and enjoy showing off my charms to an unsuspecting male or female. I am gentle, understanding, imaginative, and totally uninhibited, and would hope you are the same. Apart from the feminine point of view, and you will see I can talk and act like a real female interested in another, or a man, I would enjoy discussing with you the most intimate reactions of a man to an exciting woman under various conditions. I think we can have a great deal of excitement together. Can hardly wait for your letter. I do hope you will write."

I must confess I felt a pang or two of conscience as I read the replies to my advertisement, especially those of the "beautiful male" who "could hardly wait for my letter" and the 200 lbs of French Canadian miner who would never know, alas, what "my little heart he as to say".

Rita Meredith

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THE RELUCTANT CHESS MAN

Jeff Corydon, III

The Chess Court was resplendent with the decorations which had been prescribed by the Governor for the day's historic match. Red, white, and blue bunting harmonized with the flags fluttering on the spectator gallery, while the checkered marble surface of the court itself had been buffed to a brilliance which, in the Governor's words, had to equal that of the occasion which inspired its refurbishing.

Over the boxes of the Governor and his aides, centered at one end of the triple-tiered balcony which surrounded the vast hall, colorful banderoles summarized the enlightenment which had gripped His Excellency's conscience. One slogan which he liked especially was much in evidence, proclaiming for the edification of all who would assemble: "Democracy must invent and continually reinvent its democracy."

With the first spectators already filing in, a hum of anticipation had begun to fill the cup of the high-domed ceiling and overflow from the hall's huge crown-shaped windows. The multicolored panes were thrown open to the spring air and sunlight, and sunshafts glinting from the lustrous marble court mounted like misty ramps toward the gallery.

"It will never be the same," grumbled one of the Governor's most venerable aides — who had opposed instituting the new rule from the moment it had come under discussion — as he and his companion sidled into a *loge* adjoining the Governor's own. "Heaven knows I counseled against this foolishness, even to the point of submitting my undated resignation — which he tore up. But the truth is he had made up his mind from the start and just wouldn't listen to reason. Yesterday he even refused to receive the White King and let the poor fellow plead his side of the case. Now the King tells me he's at wit's end trying to rationalize the things to his teammates and keep them from acting rashly."

The aide pursed his lips and wagged his head in a sign of exasperation before continuing. "Economic and social and psychological disruptions are bound to result, but that doesn't matter to the Governor anymore. He's gotten too steeped in the pseudo-humanitarian propaganda which is creeping in from the outside. God! how he's changed! Why, common sense used to be the hallmark of his administration — but, of course, that was when the Governor was younger and didn't mind doing his own thinking, instead of abdicating decisions to the eggheads and their sloganeers."

"The Game of Chess is not merely an idle amusement . . . for life is a kind of Chess, in which we have points to gain, and competitors or adversaries to contend with, and in which there is a vast variety of good and ill events. . . ."

—Benjamin Franklin

The aide's partner thought better of replying that she didn't give a damn one way or the other, as long as the game went on. She flashed her teeth agreeably and aimed a vacuous stare beyond him down toward the sixty-four black and white squares which, for her, were of more interest than the political intrigue whose details the Governor's aide could always be counted on to decant during the habitual weekly outing.

The court was still empty, but she could visualize already the suspense and pageantry which soon would be unfolding below. The immense hall would resound with cheers and exhortations as the elaborately-costumed Chess Corpsmen took their places in contrasting ranks at opposite ends of the court. Then would begin the rhythmic peregrinations of the match itself, the familiar yet infinitely varying patterns of dancing from square to square, ever more intricate and inspired as play progressed. One by one, skill and sacrifice would clear the court of minor performers, and the gallery would exult in the black and white magic of the Corps' greatest champions gliding, leaping, whirling, and posing in another improvisation of the magnificent ritual which the "Governor's Game" had become—a spirited, original art form whose fascination could be barely imagined from the microcosmic march of mere wooden chessmen across a checkered board.

For the first time consciously, she realized that the most meaningful struggle in community life did not transpire at the administration building, among the bureaucrats, but down there on the Chess Court. So the Governor's new rule *did* make sense — making *both* teams fully responsible for their own moves and strategy, instead of just one of them! After all, why should one team be deployed subject to the Governor's whim, and doomed to repeated defeats on that account? How much longer could its players' steadiness and good spirits have been maintained based merely on the self-righteous pretense that it was nobler to have played and lost

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than to have enjoyed a proper share of victories even at the expense of envy and hard feelings on the part of their opponents?

This startling insight passed as swiftly as it had struck when she noticed the familiar face of the White King's Knight portrayed on the cover of the program resting on her lap. Thereupon, she lapsed into an eager scrutiny of the pre-game preparations commencing below her on the Chess Court — oblivious to what her escort continued confiding, but nonetheless beset by vague anxieties over how the rule change was going to affect her enjoyment of the traditional game.

* * *

It was the Governor himself, then just elected for the first time, who had established the tradition, so many years before than few present this day would recall, or even bother trying to recall, the considerations which had inspired its introduction.

"Every social group is characterized by its ceremonial observances," the Governor had noted in inaugurating the Chess Corps, "and it is my conviction that the essential nature of our own young community should be so epitomized and given tangible expression. Our society, highly organized and competitive as it is, where industry and intellect are consecrated to peaceful endeavors and law circumscribes the pursuit of progress — this society of ours will find still greater strength, I believe, to the extent it is reminded of these traits, and will certainly profit in relations abroad if imaged by an avocation which bespeaks its lofty qualities and purposes."

The Governor had gone on to proclaim Chess the official sport and formulate diverse activities and observances which his administration would sponsor so as to propagate and institutionalize it throughout the community. The Chess Corps was made responsible for arranging symbolic public presentations, and it was not long afterward that the first of the now customary weekly matches had been played.

Because of the community's democratic tendencies, the effect of the Governor's proclamation had spread rapidly to all social classes, and the people were quick to give substance to the shrewd innovation by their support and participation. From then on, as idea begot practice and practice begot tradition, the Chess Corps' weekly match, whereby the game was most extravagantly fostered, grew into an institution whose hold on popular sentiments not only reflected but virtually conditioned the attitudes and aspirations of the flourishing community.

Indeed, many youths set their sights on serving in the Corps, for renown and rich rewards awaited the game's most adept and fortunate practitioners. The impressive ornate Chess Court eventually built to accommodate their contests came to symbolize for most people a philosophy and a way of life, offering a reassuring reference point in a world otherwise fraught with uncertainties for both the individual and the community at large.

The Governor had been wise to provide, in his original plan, for the Chess Corps to be formed and perpetuated according to democratic principles. The Black and White Teams both were entitled to opt players and conduct their training without official meddling. But here Fate stepped in to upset all calculations. During the organizational stage, the players enrolled under the White standard were more skilled, by and large, than those who joined the Black. As weeks of rivalry stretched into years, they developed an ascendancy which amounted to habit and which, by the painstaking formation of new recruits, they passed along to succeeding White Teams promoted through the Corps into public competition. The White King of any moment came to rank among the foremost community figures, as did his Queen, and the White Rooks, Bishops, and Knights to a lesser extent.

Some years ago, the Governor had become aware— via observation and report — of an undertone of griping within the Corps itself and among popular backers of the underdog squad. In a show of characteristic benevolence, he had moved to redress the imbalance created by historic circumstance, issuing an amendment to the original playing regulations which had remained in effect ever since, until now it was to be abrogated by the Governor's new rule. The sentiments inspiring it had impressed the community strongly at the time, although there were dissenters, and gradually it had assimilated the same force of tradition as enshrined the terms of the inaugural proclamation.

Simply outlined, the amendment was this: The Governor would from now on be the Black Team's patron, throwing his wisdom and experience into the balance of what had proven to be an unequal contest. The Black King's strategy and his men's moves would be approved and sponsored — or even conceived if the situation warranted — by the Governor himself. Naturally, as a corollary to assuming this sweeping charge (which some felt smacked of favoritism), he reserved the right to veto any Black moves with which he disagreed.

It was at this point that the weekly match had been dubbed the "Governor's Game" — for His Excellency had revolutionized the play by taking a direct hand, pitting his own skill against that of the community's established chess champions.

The Governor was credited in ensuing years with having saved the game. After taking the reins of the Black Team, his leadership at first proved unbelievably effective — dazzling the public and infusing confidence into the veins of the erstwhile losers. They basked in the prospect of a fortunate future, as they listened to their mentor, and watched, and increasingly learned the fine points of the game. But above all they depended on the Governor, and for a time this was enough.

As for the White Team, they went on playing their best. The process of adjusting to the stiffer competition was painful, but they were resolute men and accomplished chessmasters, so no match went uncontested. Gradually they devised new attacks and defenses and, after some lean years of rebuilding, they had battled back to the top.

What made this possible was that the Governor turned out to be a handicap for the Black Team even

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as he was their greatest strength — a paradox best explained, perhaps, by reference to some of his qualities of character and temperament.

The fact is that the Governor was only human. He was an enlightened leader who wished sincerely to implement the ideals he professed. But he was an authentic democrat, too, and a feet-on-the-ground politician. For all his wisdom and clairvoyance he was, in the last analysis, more like the common men he ruled than like the image of him which they loved to concoct. Sternly self-critical, despite the praise lavished upon him by others, he could look himself in the mirror of his mind and ask, "Who the hell are *you* to be telling all rest of this community what's good for them?"

Thus it was, after the Governor's Game was instituted, that matters again evolved somewhat differently than expected. Although he had projected himself into the thick of the game, the Governor felt no compulsion to flaunt his superiority before either the public or the Corpsmen themselves, or to approach his weekly stint as a race for the wire to be run with unbridled *elan*. Having originally conceived the sport as an embodiment of community life and mores, he preferred to promote it for its own sake, and for the public's general pleasure, and desired least of all that it become an instrument for his own glorification or an avenue for others to favors within his power to dispense.

As the Governor saw it, the amendment he had formulated set the record straight as to where he stood. Having dramatized his concern for the underdog and his capacity to beat the cream of the Chess Corps at their own game, his modesty got the better of him and his zeal for masterminding the Black Team's game wore off a bit. He slipped into the habit of letting matches take more or less their natural course, intervening in the play in a random fashion that served only to impair the Black players' own efforts to develop a coherent team strategy.

Inevitably, another current of displeasure had begun rippling through the community over the state of the traditional game. But for many years, being distracted by other matters, the Governor had been satisfied with philosophizing — irrelevantly if sometimes reverently — to excuse the new dominance which the White Chessmen had achieved.

He made a fetish, for example, of citing the law of averages as insurance that Black wouldn't continue losing indefinitely, and the law of diminishing returns as proof against the White King and his teammates' parlaying their ever greater advantage into a myth of invincibility. "Anyway, it's not who wins, but how you play the game," he would expostulate at times, with all the steel-on-silver certitude of minting a shiny new maxim. "That expresses one of democracy's basic tenets, and one of mine. When I play, I play for the game itself, not just for the prize. It's been my observation that any contest deteriorates into a mere unethical brawl if both sides take themselves too seriously and go for broke."

Still another of His Excellency's defenses turned on his definition of dictatorship as "the interposition of a non-accredited prince between a white queen and the black king she holds in check." "The only legitimate remedies to check," he would explain dispassionately, "lie within confines of the chessboard itself. They can't properly be imposed from without." But whenever he made this point, a few older listeners invariably winced, for it seemed to have slipped his mind that the Governor's Game had gotten started precisely through his imposing an earlier amendment to the original rules.

* * *

All eyes in the now packed gallery were fixed on the colorfully-festooned box where the Governor could be expected to make his usual prompt entry. Under normal circumstances, his arrival at the Chess Court was always a focus of interest, for it signaled that the eagerly-awaited match was near at hand. But today the range of emotions reflected in the general attentiveness was wider than ever before. Now that the Governor finally had gone beyond moralizing and had acted, remitting full control of the game to the contestants, he had provoked lively controversy in the community.

It was precisely two o'clock as His Excellency stepped through the curtain into his *loge*. A characteristically warm smile illuminated his face even as he made his appearance, but it broadened noticeably at the round of applause and cheers which rose in the gal-

THE BUTCHER WITH NOTHING BUT BONES

You touch the window,
certainly it is
there. You are having
a very good time
touching the window,
imagining what
is hiding behind.

There, the regally
garmented coquette
cautiously drops by,
feeling the window
pane too, blind to your
vigil. She is the
good friend just arrived
in the nick of time.

What would you give for
the right size rock? When
wearing the window
away with your nose,
the window grows. Your
lips are finally
rocks, and the window
keeps growing. She is
just fine. She is just
being crushed. She is
just your kind of girl.

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THE SHOP KEEPER

"There is a word for it,
A simple word,
And the word goes around."

—Donald Justice

It is too early to close-up
the shop but you are tired and it
shows — you just broke a two dollar
thing. God only knows how these things
keep breaking. Now you think you know.

You close the door and leave to find
your home. Afraid to think of what
business is coming to, you
think of sleep, dishwater, gaslamps,
cypress, egg-shells, hell; what are you

coming to — bells, rags, big Sunday.
Anxious to find your house, perhaps
laden with mail, monuments, sin,
eyelashes. You feel like a woman,
like a basement tobacco shop,

a busted fountain, a sloppy
staircase. Dark, damp lists of words, you
say them; one will say it all
soon. Then you will not have to sweep-
up in the morning. The two dollars

will be well invested — barrel
organ, german ladies, tug-of-war,
arithmetic, geraniums . . .

James Tate

lery to greet him. To spectators in the nearby boxes, the numerous creases which reinforced his God-given features — life's own biography of his long and rich personal history — may have seemed deeper than usual. Like a crew of make-up artists, the pressures of the past few days had served to emphasize each furrow as events had moved toward this afternoon's climactic match. Ironically, these days had sufficed to do what previous years had never accomplished: for the first time in his venerable career, His Excellency today looked old. And yet, this impression was one of detail — as when flaws leap forth from a painting viewed too closely. From a farther and fairer prospect, the Governor's lusty bearing and the magnetic quality of his expression captured the attention and left one with no doubt as to the man's essential youth and vigor of spirit.

With several brisk strides the Governor reached his place at the seat of honor and leaned forward, one hand on the railing, the other extended in acknowledgment of the crowd's ovation. A counterpoint of catcalls reminded him that his latest decision was far from universally approved, but he gave no sign of being ruffled by the expression of dissent. When he straightened up, his sweeping movement and the long finger of his black top hat seemed to beckon eyes to the banderole stretching above him, a bold-lettered affirmation that "Democracy releases the energies of every human being." Then he sat down and began speaking animatedly to an immediate neighbor in his party, and the distant viewer could almost fancy his box as being one panel in an outsized cartoon strip, with the banner putting words in the Governor's mouth.

Gazing down at final preparations on the Chess Court, the spectators were prone at this moment to picture the players in their luxurious subterranean dressing rooms, preening uniforms and polishing their separate strategies. As a matter of fact, the last-minute preliminaries of the White Team had taken a strange turn on this particular day, the King having gathered his colleagues about him for what was billed as a "pep talk" but turned out to be a vitriolic denunciation of the Governor's new rule and, what's more, of the Governor himself.

"It is certainly no mere coincidence," the White King was saying with obvious irritaton, "that the color of our standard has come, in this community as throughout the world, to represent the best human attributes, a symbolism confirmed by qualities of our environment on every side. As white bespeaks purity and honesty and enlightenment, so does black represent their converse, those dark powers whose refutation is inherent in the principles of our society. Were it otherwise, the distinction would not be evidenced so unmistakably in nature itself, for sheer meaninglessness — as we all know — is foreign to our ordered and logical universe."

When the White Queen nodded, smiling pointedly toward — but not quite at — the two Bishops, they shuffled their white-slippered feet nervously as if to dodge her telepathic invitation to agree. Her gaze played in rapid turn upon the Knights and Rooks, who evinced variously ambiguous expressions, before coming to rest on the cluster of Pawns who completed the assembled team.

One of them, a handsome, husky fellow accustomed to playing as the Queen's Pawn, mirrored her approval most brightly of all. Having long nourished Kingly yearnings, including the most elemental, he lost no occasion to curry favor with the object of his not-so-secret aspirations. Several of his peers also smiled, irresistibly swayed by the image of social prestige and intellectual and physical prowess which the King and Queen embodied. They were content to swallow as their own this dictated reaction to the Governor's new rule, being convinced that its ethical justification — or lack thereof — was a matter beyond their competence, better left to the *elite* to judge. All the same, a few Pawns felt inner misgivings about the seditious tone which ever more infected their leader's tirade as he continued. And more than one noticed that, by the time he finished speaking, his normally pleasant face was contorted and had taken on a livid cast which contrasted oddly with the fresh-laundered, immaculate whiteness of the Chess King's finery that he wore.

* * *

In the long history of the Governor's Game there had never been a truly dull performance. The splendid costumes, the pageantry of staging, and the nimble grandeur of the players' movements over the Chess

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Court always assured audience enjoyment, even of the matches from which the factors of sharp competition and tactical astuteness were missing.

But on this afternoon, as if to confirm the sagacity of the Governor's latest edict, play had reached a pinnacle of brilliance, in both conception and execution, never before witnessed on the Chess Court. The new rule seemed to have wrought a miracle on the Black Team's members, and the exceptional quality of their play, ever since White's opening, had called forth hitherto untapped ingenuity on the part of their opponents. The shouted and clapped approval which cascaded onto the Court kept achieving incredibly greater crescendoes as the number of players on the checkered floor dwindled to comprise only the Black and White Kings and several other incomparable virtuosos.

Still engaged with the Black King were a Bishop, a Knight, and his Queen. For the White, a Knight and Rook were deployed defensively beside their leader, whose prospects had just been dealt a severe blow by the capture and retirement from the match of the White Queen. It had been her misforturne to climax a thrilling series of maneuvers, superbly danced, by an indiscreet move which left her easy prey for the rival Queen. Before White's resulting disadvantage, the crowd had started to sense an upset in the making — the first, and certainly not the last, fruits which it was now apparent to all would accrue to the Black Team under the changed regime which the Governor had decreed.

With the match moving inexorably to an end, the White players fell back one by one into the block of squares where they had commenced this odyssey over their two-dimensional black and white realm, immediately below the Governor's second-tier gallery box. Although facing certain defeat, the King, the Knight, and the Rook successively lifted the crowd from their seats in tribute, by a last stand featuring a sequence of mellifluous dances the likes of whose graceful gestures and leaps and twirls defied recollection. Even the Governor, whose unemotional composure had often been remarked by *aficionados* as an oddity of the weekly game, sprang to his feet to applaud their spectacular show of skill. Some who observed this phenomenon perceived correctly that the Governor's enthusiastic display reflected above all the fact that the match had proven indisputably the validity of his new rule. Today for the first time the energies and talents of *all* the players were being released in full measure, and the Governor's Game seemed certain as a consequence to gain unprecedented new interest, prestige, and significance in the community.

Finally, the ceremonial trumpets blared and the singsong chant of "Checkmate . . . Checkmate . . .!" swelled from the gallery's throat, accompanied by the orchestral flourishes which customarily announced the triumph of either team. On the Court itself, the Black King shimmied and spun in an almost paroxysmal celebration of victory which equalled in terpsichorean flare and freshness any sequence ever danced in a Governor's Game.

* * *

All at once a vortex of gasping silence sucked in the spectators' roar — then expelled it with ear-splitting force. Now it was the White King commanding, even hypnotizing, attention as his lithe form clambered swiftly up one of two ornately-carved pillars which supported and framed the Governor's *loge*. With sureness of foot and strength of limb born of sheer animal frenzy he had gained the second tier before the gaping multitude realized what was happening or could comprehend the harsh significance of the slender lance he had snatched from a White Knight before beginning his bold ascent.

There was no warning for the Governor. His first consciousness of danger was to stare death in the eye, as the White King's livid face bobbed abruptly over the parapet before him. His Excellency had faced death more than once — but the White King's demented glare lent it a measure of repugnance he had never experienced. If he shrank involuntarily, it was not from fear

Posthumous Poems

CLIPJOINT

Offstage the record turns; onstage she twists,
Prances a little, haunches, and resists,
Hands cupping hairy treasure under gold.
Some black peeks over that is twelve years old
Or so. What does it matter? There she goes,
Wrinkling from her asshole to her nose.
She'll join me at my table I suppose.

THE HOUSE

outside the backyard
halfacre
fence

under instructions
our children
go

for there is much to tell

the basement's flooding
the bills high
for

water and light now
the pump going
spring

for there is much to tell

of the pump going
against nature
oh

no more than that for
sure, curtains blown
to.

For there is much to tell.

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but from the utter shock of the development and from the horror which seized him at the split-second idea that this particular hand might be the one to contrive his extinction.

No words passed across the railing, for all the usual eloquence of both figures in the grim tableau, and for all each might have told of the deep emotions which had sparked their silently violent confrontation. A current of hatred and of love, of solidarity and yet irreconcilable difference, coursed between them — fission and fusion mated in a shattering yet imperceptible explosion.

Poised on the balcony's outer edge, like an earnest marksman at a carnival shooting gallery, the White King raised his spear with quick, vicious resolution. Then, suddenly, he realzed the dire result of having miscalculated the force of his movement. His expression altered piteously as the hand which had secured his perch rasped loose from its grasp on the pillar and he plummeted backward and downward — clutching as he fell for some miraculous handfast which might still open his way to justification before God and Man.

The King's hurtling frame came to rest on the rectangular black and white parcel of the Chess Court whence he and his Queen had sallied forth to so many triumphs and, in a moment, the same crimson which splotched the tousled folds of his costume was trickling from his broken and inert body over the pair of adjacent squares.

Amazingly, there was no general disorder in the wake of this extra-ordinary event, although the mills of conversation had begun buzzing matter-of-factly, grinding out its meaning, by the time the first players of both teams reached their fallen colleague. By tacit accord the White Queen alone bent over her partner's motionless form. When she neither rose nor spoke, the other players instinctively tightened their insulating ring, black and white sleeves intertwined against the curiosity-seekers inevitably drawn by the scent of death.

Soon the Governor arrived on the scene and wedged into the inner circle. His eyes had lost their habitual joviality and were slightly moist and the hand he laid gently on the Queen's shoulder trembled just enough to make her glance up and take note of his coming. Amid the expectant hush which greeted him, he feared momentarily that he might vent the anger that had swelled in him as he descended hurriedly to this last encounter with the White King. But his voice was strangely mild when it came and betrayed no trace of the bitterness he had felt.

"Maybe it's an old man's pride, but I wish he could have loved the Governor as much as he loved the Governor's Game," His Excellency observed, with a tone more apologetic than critical. "That would have spared us all a heavy burden of mourning today, and of forgetting tomorrow. I know the King will be missed a lot, as one of the Corps' finest talents and a real competitor — the kind who could always keep me from getting too big for my breeches. That's why what has happened is a catastrophe for the game as much as for the man himself. And perhaps the worst of it is this: that we'll never know how much greater greatness he could have won under the new rule."

The Governor refrained from saying more.

The White Queen's gaze softened only slightly in the warmth of his tribute. When she stood up it was with empty eyes still turned inward on a chilly heart, like a white stone statue coming to life. Many of the spectators in the gallery felt keen but somehow inarticulate sympathies stirring in their chests as they watched her from afar move solemnly away from the Governor and the other mourners. In all probability she would have stumbled and fallen on her way had not a handsome, husky Pawn passed a solicitous arm around her shoulders and buoyed her toward the edge of the Chess Court where the dressing-room door was marked "White Team Only."

Bernard Strempek

I LOVED A DAMNED GIRL ONCE

I loved a damned girl once.
She breathed into my ear
Such nonsense as the gods
Must have dreamed to hear
When men believed in beasts
Birds and showers of gold
And gods in raping girls.

What nonsense did she hiss?
She said: I like your cock
The way it grows inside
Like a flowering rock
On which to pitch my love!
I loved her while she moved
And loved as best I could.

She also purred: Move close,
Exalt me like desire:
Here is the greatest Good,
Here the phoenix-fire!
Aristippus stands proved!
We sniffed that world like beasts
Ripe with the smell of flesh.

What nonsense did she hiss?
I listened and I chose
That bride and her full kiss:
Her tongue lapped like a ghost
And wetted me with love.
What kind of love was that?
We loved until we slept.

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Three to Five

Mabel Hicks

Miss Cadmus had come out for her marketing and her daily walk at just the wrong time. She stood hesitating at the very edge of the narrow village sidewalk, clutching her laden bag and bracing her spare body against the assault of hordes of grade school children. They swept by, wailing like fire sirens, zooming like jets. A little group played monster with roars and grimaces and shrieks of terror. Children. Children, she remembered thankfully, that she would not, would never be called upon to discipline.

She drew her heavy coat tighter against the January cold. Only a few stragglers now. A moment more and she could go home to her painting and her books. She stepped out briskly, warm with gratitude to Lawrence, the half-brother, thirty-one years older, whom she had hardly known. For nearly twenty years she had walked softly in rooms belonging to other women. Now she was going to her own house, set in her own wide yard.

A stout, lumbering youth bumped against her, knocking the bag from her hand, mumbled, "Pardon me," and ran on.

"Oh, we'll pick them up. Did he hurt you?" Miss Cadmus, a little dazed, shook her head. A thin, plain little girl was staring anxiously at her. Involuntarily, she smiled and received a gap-toothed grin in response. Two smaller girls, exactly alike, with short, dark curls and black-lashed blue eyes, were gathering up her packages and cans and the apples that were rolling over the sidewalk. The biggest girl held the shopping bag while the other two refilled it.

"I'll carry it for you," said one twin.

"No, Doreen, let the lady have it," ordered the biggest child. "And you put those cookies right back in the bag, Noreen. The lady—"

"Miss Cadmus."

"Miss Cadmus doesn't want them opened."

Slowly, with a little sigh, Noreen dropped the cellophane-wrapped chocolate marshmallow cookies, her wide eyes fixed on Miss Cadmus's face. As the small, eager faces looked up at her, Miss Cadmus's hand moved toward the shopping bag.

"Come on, kids. Don't bother Miss Cadmus."

"Aw Wahneta!"

Miss Cadmus read shame and entreaty in the oldest child's face. She withdrew her hand, said thank you, and started to walk on. Glancing back she saw the twins following her closely and Wahneta a little way behind.

"Let me carry it," begged one twin.

But just then a much larger little girls with tangled, whitish hair came running across the street. One twin began to cry, "Lil's after us!" and shrank behind Wahneta. The other squared her shoulders and lifted her chin.

"Where's the doughnut you promised me? Wahneta, make Noreen and Doreen give me my doughnut."

"They can't Lil. We've not got any doughnuts."

"You did have. You went and gobbled them all up. You said I could have one if I didn't tell."

"Tell what?"

"You know, Wahneta. About Doreen throwing their lunches in the wastebasket."

"I didn't!"

"She didn't!"

"You always do. You had a whole pile of things the other kids gave you." She grabbed an arm of each twin. "You got something good in your pockets now?"

They shook their heads. "Arnie didn't have any doughnuts to give us today, Lil. Tomorrow we'll —"

Miss Cadmus had not been able to walk on. Now she saw Wahnet staring at her sisters with a white, sick look. She made herself say pleasantly but authoritatively, "Let the twins go, Lil."

The big girl gave her an angry, contemptuous glance.

Wahneta spoke quickly. "Lil, you heard Miss Cadmus. You take your hands off my sisters. And you don't have to tell. I'll tell. Tomorrow morning. Doreen, you and Noreen make me so ashamed."

Noreen was crying. Doreen shouted fiercely after the retreating Lil, "Why'n't you have sense enough to keep your mouth shut?" She looked defiantly at Wahneta. "All you gave us this morning was one peanut butter sandwich. Noreen was hungry."

"Please don't tell, Wahneta." Noreen burst into fresh sobbing. "They give us oranges and cookies and — and sometimes boloney."

They had been walking on, and now they had reached Miss Cadmus' yard. Mrs. Pennywick, her daily help, a tiny woman with bright black eyes, was at the side door shaking a dust mop. She laid it down and hurried toward them, her sharp nose quivering.

"Well, thank you again for picking my groceries," Miss Cadmus said.

Mrs. Pennywick took the bag and frowned at the children. "You kids go right on home now," she ordered sharply. "Miss Cadmus hasn't anything for you."

Wahneta flinched. She turned away quickly without replying to Miss Cadmus's soft "Goodbye."

Miss Cadmus watched the three children run across the street. Slowly she went in, hung her coat and scarf

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in the hall closet, and sat down in her big chair before the gas log. Central heating and an open fire and no more playground duty in the biting wind. She stirred uneasily. Those children had been bareheaded and barelegged. Wahneta's skimpy coat was fastened insecurely with safety pins. She rose and looked across the street at the little girls, apparently still arguing, standing in the yard directly across from hers before the cottage where paper had replaced two panes of glass.

"Is that where they live?" she murmured to Mrs. Pennywick, who had come in, wearing her coat and scarf, and was standing beside her.

"M-hm. The Donnelly children. It's a pity we don't have any zoning. You oughtn't to be so close to a shack like that."

Miss Cadmus moved toward her chair and her book, but her eyes were drawn to the children again. "They look so cold. Why don't they go in the house?"

"Oh, Reba wouldn't give them the key. No telling what the twins might do."

"But isn't their mother—?"

She works out at the factory. Gets home around five. It's kind of a shame school lets out so early."

Three small children waiting until five o'clock for warmth and care. She saw the little girls open the door of their ramshackle garage and go in.

"I suppose the father isn't at home yet, either?"

"Oh, no, Lew gets back from the city in the night on that two o'clock train. He was out of work so long they lost their car and most of their furniture. Don't you worry now. Wahneta and the twins won't bother you any more. You just have to let them know. None of the kids on this street bothered around this house while Mr. Cadmus was here."

For some days Miss Cadmus did not see the Donnelly children. All morning she painted in the big north room with windows that opened upon sky and trees and a hill. For nearly twenty years there had been only a tiny, cluttered space in a rented bedroom, a few crowded weeks of summer, and now and then an hour snatched from lesson planning, duplicating seatwork, and correcting hundreds of scrubby papers and workbooks. And now Lawrence had given her time and money and her own studio. She worked each morning with concentration and growing delight.

But every afternoon she felt uneasy. She still read a little after lunch, rested a little, and sometimes painted or sketched. And she waited carefully until all the homegoing children were off the street before she ventured out each afternoon. She tried not to look at the house with the broken windows. Why must she worry now? Hadn't she given years and years to small children? But she did worry, and her afternoons were no longer tranquil.

And then one day just outside her gate she met the oldest Donnelly child, alone, her forehead creased and anxious.

"Hello Wahneta," Miss Cadmus said, smiling.

The little girl smiled back, her face brightening. "Have you seen Noreen and Doreen?" she asked.

"No, I haven't. Didn't they walk home with you?"

"I had to stay in. I can't get arithmetic very fast, and today I didn't get through." She looked up at Miss Cadmus, who nodded sympathetically.

Wahneta turned and started walking along beside her.

"They know they're supposed to wait for me. Mommy doesn't want them at home by themselves. She wants me to take care of them. It's just till she gets home." Again she looked anxiously at Miss Cadmus, who smiled and nodded. Wahneta's cold little hand stole into hers.

"They used to wait. And we would go in the garage and play school. We've got some boxes out there. And they would read to me." Her voice dropped to a shamed murmur. "They won't ever read to me any more."

"They don't want to read to you now?"

"Doreen says she can read better than I can. The last time Noreen read to me, Doreen knew *always,* and I thought it was *away.*"

Wahneta withdrew her hand and ran up Mrs. Tracey's walk and rang the doorbell. She came back shaking her head. "Not there, either. They knew they were supposed to wait today."

"They didn't wait?"

"Doreen got mad that day I told their teacher on them." Her eyes fell for a moment and then lifted. "I had to! Mommy would yell at me if I let them waste food like that, and they know better than to ask the other kids for things. They've got to eat what I fix them. I didn't get after them that time we didn't have any bread and we couldn't take any lunch, but I guess that gave Doreen the idea." She looked despairingly up and down the street. "Where can they be? Noreen would still mind me if Doreen would let her."

They had stopped on the sidewalk outside Mrs. Herriott's yard. "I don't think they'd be here," said Wahneta doubtfully, half turning toward the door.

At that moment Mrs. Herriott, tall and black-browed, strode around her house, shooing the twins before her. Noreen was crying. Doreen held her head high, but her face was white. "Now you stay out of here," Mrs. Herriott scolded. "Don't you come in my yard again! Do you know what your sisters did, Wahneta? They broke a board in my fence and threw rocks at my pet cat. Now go right home, all three of you. Your mother ough to be there to see you."

Miss Cadmus saw Wahneta flinch and grow pale.

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Mrs. Herriott turned her back on them and strode into her house.

"We better go home, kids." Wahneta's voice trembled. "We'll play in the garage."

"It's cold in there. Come on, Noreen. Mrs. Tracey will let us go in her house."

"Doreen! You know what Mommy said: 'Come right home after school.' "

"She lets us play with Alice and Jeannie."

"They have to take a nap. Mrs. Tracey won't want you—"

But the twins were gone. Wahneta sighed as she and Miss Cadmus followed more slowly.

And why am I going back with her? Miss Cadmus asked herself as they came to the Tracey house, next door to her own. She looked uneasily at the old garage across the street. The door was partly open. A gust of wind banged it shut.

"Goodbye, Miss Cadmus. I better wait here for them." Wahneta was standing on the sidewalk, looking small and wistful. Her face was reddened and her legs were blue with cold.

Perhaps I ought to ask her in, Miss Cadmus thought. But I started to walk. I need to walk. And I want to do more on that sky while the light holds.

"Goodbye, Wahneta," she said. She walked on determinedly past her own yard. Twenty minutes more in the open air. Ten minutes east. She might as well walk east, away from the Traceys and Mrs. Herriott. Then ten minutes back. And she would look at the skyline and the clouds, and she would think whether she might join a class in painting in the city next week. Why didn't Wahneta wear something on her head? It wasn't really so cold if you dressed sensibly. Of themselves Miss Cadmus's feet turned back toward home.

Wahneta was still on the sidewalk outside the Tracey yard. She was sitting now with her feet tucked under her.

Miss Cadmus went into her hall and unbuttoned her coat. If she asked these children into her home—she simply was not going to start it.

She went back outside and called, "Come in a little while, Wahneta, won't you, and get warm?"

The child, hunched into a tiny ball, lifted her head.

"You can watch for your sisters from my windows. Come in, won't you?"

Wahneta shook her head. "No, thank you. I'm not cold."

Miss Cadmus couldn't get the right blend of colors for those clouds near the horizon line. And her brush was shaking. She laid it down. After all she could get up early in the morning and have the best of the day's light. Perhaps she really needed a rest and a change of occupation. She hung up her smock and reached for her library book. There had never before been enough time for reading. Just little bits and pieces of time. Just as there had not been time to see if she could really paint anything more than a few daubs and splashes to please her second grade children.

She turned her chair away from the window. After all, she had asked the child in. But in a moment she put down her book and walked restlessly about the room.

The doorbell rang. It was Tuesday, the day Mrs. Pennywick left at noon. Other days she worked until three-thirty. Miss Cadmus hurried to the door. She found both twins on her porch and Wahneta a little behind them, shocked and disapproving, pleading, "Come on, kids. Don't bother Miss Cadmus. Come on home."

She smiled and opened her door wide. "I'd like to have you visit me. I'm always alone on Tuesday afternoon." She looked over the twins' heads at Wahneta, hesitating on the step. "Do come in, all three of you. You'll be keeping me from being lonely."

They really behaved very well, she said to herself later. And it was fortunate that she had closed the door into her studio. True, Doreen had said, "What's in there?" But she had answered, "That's just a workroom."

She gave the twins cookies and milk in her kitchen. Wahneta swallowed and said, "No, thank you. I'm not hungry."

Then she brought out a card table and old magazines and scissors for paper dolls.

Really it would be fun to have the children from three to five every Tuesday afternoon. And then, perhaps, she could again savor her quiet and leisure and her painting and reading.

The children continued to behave well on their weekly visits. Some of the lines of strain left Wahneta's small face. Assured by Miss Cadmus that she was really helping, she finally allowed herself to accept refreshments. Now and then Noreen and Doreen rang the bell hopefully on another day, but Miss Cadmus told them she would see them on Tuesday.

She had altered her daily schedule. She still painted each morning, but she went for her walk shortly after lunch and then lay on her bed for a little rest. Sometimes she slept.

One Friday she woke with a feeling that she had slept longer than usual. A quarter to four by her bedside clock. She could hear sounds belowstairs. Perhaps Mrs. Pennywick had forgotten to turn off the television. Miss Cadmus hurried into her clothes and went quietly down. Children's voices, subdued but distinct, were coming from the studio. She opened the door softly.

Noreen lay on the floor squeezing red paint from a tube. As Miss Cadmus watched, aghast and trembling, she thrust both hands into the bright pool and began to streak it across her paper. Doreen, mounted on a stool before the big easel, was adding blue to Miss Cadmus's sky, the sky that had only just begun to take on the look she'd been trying for.

"Stop!" Her voice sounded louder and harsher than she had intended. This wouldn't do. She musn't scream at them.

Noreen jumped up, red dripping from her hands, and looked uncertainly at her twin. Doreen smiled disarmingly. "Look, Miss Cadmus. It needed more blue. See how pretty it—"

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IN THE PLAYHOUSE

The playhouse is open
And the usual bats
Hanging upside down
Like the day before yesterday
Hum "Three Blind Mice."

I rather like the teacups
And the toy piano
But it's not much fun
Waiting for the children
Who should be home by now

Who should at any minute
Rise like giant moths
From the long grass
And appear at the one window
Anxious at my presence here,

Quite naturally anxious
Since no one nice would be caught dead
In this old coat of mine
Which besides missing several buttons
Is simply full of holes.

Oh, they won't be happy when I hand it over
And ask them what they think
They've been doing all these years.
Meanwhile I play the piano
Watch the darkness settle in the yard

And pretend to have a cup of tea.
That's the way it goes,
Me sitting here in this old coat
And the bats humming to themselves
While the dolls

Those small stiff likenesses
Who never say anything
Dwindle on the playhouse floor.

ORDER

for Catherine Davis

Surrounded
by the simple
undemanding order
of papered walls,
of windmills waterwheels
trees descending
two by two
in the green weather,
all that in me drifts
drifts steadily
towards the dark windows
where the afternoon,
the aftermath of storm,
and my own reflection float
indifferent and resigned
as the first star,
the light that takes
blind light years coming
and sends us,
lives and objects,
a vast destruction
toiling seaward
and past, their stiff
sharp blades unmoved,
the windmills
in the perfect weather.

Michael Van Walleghen

"Come right out to the bathroom. We'll get this paint off your hands." Her voice was under control now. She was picking up and recapping the scattered tubes of paint. She took up Noreen's paper.

"Careful!" shrilled Doreen. "It's not dry yet. Careful!"

"Listen," Miss Cadmus said, her voice even and quiet. "This is my room and these are my paints, and I didn't give you permission—" (Second grade children sitting guiltily mute while the teacher stormed, "I didn't give you permission!") Her lips twitched. Hope flared in Doreen's face. "Can we?"

"No." She wasn't angry any more, but she must be firm. Apparently that no had sounded final. They were trailing after her with no more than regretful looks at the easel and Noreen's picture, which, from old habit, she had held gingerly by the corners and placed on a newspaper-covered table. Its brilliant reds, purples, and blues reminded her for a moment of painting day in her second grade and children's ecstatic faces.

But she mustn't let them feel comfortable about taking over her studio. And how had they got in, anyway?

Oh, Doreen explained, giggling, that had been easy. They'd sneaked in while old Penny was emptying garbage and had hidden in a closet until they heard her leave.

As the children scrubbed, Miss Cadmus said matter-of-factly, "This isn't Tuesday, you know. So you can't come next Tuesday or the next. I'll show you on the calendar when you may come again, and I'll tell Wahneta. Where is Wahneta?"

Noreen and Doreen didn't know. She had to stay after, they thought. She always had to stay after. They got their work done in school. They didn't see why Wahneta couldn't.

Oh, but you don't have to be mothers at eight years old, thought Miss Cadmus. She was sorry about Wahneta, but the twins couldn't be allowed to treat her

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house as if it were their own. She crossed the street with them and sat on a box in their garage watching them until Wahneta came.

Twice in the next week she saw the three children playing decorously in their yard. She smiled and waved. They smiled and waved back. But she was troubled and restless. She had removed the offending blue from her canvas and was struggling with cloud effects. On Saturday she had enrolled in a weekly art class in the city and had brought home four new library books. But she couldn't get on with her painting. She couldn't even lose herself in reading. Why, when she had given years and years to small children, couldn't she feel that two hours a week were enough to spend with the twins and Wahneta?

On Thursday afternoon she was sitting before her fireplace with a book. It had been snowing hard, and she was trying not to think how cold the Donnelly garage must be. The doorbell rang. Wahneta was there, breathless and wet with snow. "Miss Cadmus," she gasped, "have you seen the twins? I've been to Traceys' and Raglans' and—"

"I'll help you look," Miss Cadmus said briskly. She put an arm around the tiny, shivering child. "Come in while I get my coat. You've tried all the neighbors?"

Wahneta nodded.

"Can you think of any other place they might have gone?"

"Well, one time they went way up to Sam's Market. I think Noreen asked for candy."

"We'll go there."

The snow was still falling, and Miss Cadmus took Wahneta's hand as they picked their way along.

Sam's Market was a tiny store owned and operated by an old man and his wife. They walked into dimness and the smell of sawdust and ripe bananas. Mrs. Sam's broad bulk was turned away from them. She was putting apples into a bag. Sam, a little, brown man, was smiling at Noreen.

"Both of us like red best," Miss Cadmus heard her say, and he held out two bright red lollipops.

"Noreen!" began Wahneta in an indignant whisper, but then her eyes turned to the back of the store. Miss Cadmus looked, too. Doreen was quietly slipping a bag of malted milk balls into her coat pocket.

Miss Cadmus saw Wahneta turn white. She put a reassuring hand on her shoulder. "I'll see about her," she whispered.

She went back to the racks of candy and pretzels. "Doreen," she said, "have you any money?"

"Oh, no. I was just looking at things."

"Then put the candy back."

Slowly Doreen took one package from her pocket and flung at at the rack. Miss Cadmus caught it and put it neatly back in place. Doreen started to walk away.

"Wait. Now the rest."

With her head down, Doreen took another package of candy and two bags of pretzels from her pockets. She turned them inside out.

As they walked away from the store, Noreen handed one lollipop to her twin, who struck at her hand. "He gave them to us," she said anxiously. Doreen accepted the candy and tore off the wrapper.

Miss Cadmus looked down at Wahneta. "You know, I've missed you this week," she said. She saw the small, pale face light with pleasure. Why, it's true, she thought. I have missed her. And the twins, too. There's that big room where Lawrence slept. I can have Mrs. Pennywick help me move the bed out. And she can leave at three. She'll like that.

"It's lonely at my house in the afternoon," she went on. "I need some company. Do you think you girls could be my company every day after school?"

Wahneta's eyes were shining. "You need us, Miss Cadmus?" she whispered.

"And will you let us paint, too?" asked Noreen.

Why not? Small easels, tempera paints, and big sheets of paper. And of course, some toys and books. It would be fun to equip the playroom.

"Oh, yes," she said. "One day soon you may help me buy the paints."

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Books

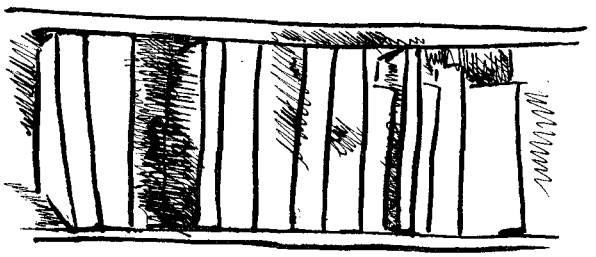
BR-R-R-R-R-

In Cold Blood, Truman Capote, Random House, New York, 1966. 343 pp., $5.95.

Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood,* as every literate American must know by now, tells the true story of a multiple murder, from the planning of the crime to the execution of the killers, and in telling this story delineates the characters of the victims, of their friends and neighbors, of the officials charged with bringing the killers to justice, and of the killers themselves. It is an extraordinary good book.

What distinguishes *In Cold Blood* from most run-of-the-mill non-fictional narratives is Capote's use of dialogue and interior monologues based on his characters' actual words, elicited by him in long, informal interviews and subsequently set down from memory. In preparing himself to write what he calls the "non-fiction novel," of which this book, he maintains, is the first and only example, he practiced memorizing conversations until he could record them in his notes with an accuracy of about ninety-five per cent. Though I have reservations about the interior monologues (of which more later), I am impressed by most of the other uses to which he puts these verbal transcriptions. They enable him to characterize his people with a consistency that writers of fiction will probably envy, and to record with a rare fidelity the fleeting impressions of witnesses to events at which he was not present. The two most powerful scenes in the book, the murder and the discovery of the bodies, are verbatim reports by two of the people involved.

But the book is more than an exercise in craftsmanship. It fairly shimmers with sociological, psychological, and theological implications, though only the psychological are ever made explicit, and though Capote himself carefully refrains from theorizing about the meaning of the story he tells. Indeed, in the face of such complexity as the narrative lays bare, any explanatory formula is likely to seem irrelevant. Take, for instance, the question of the killers' motives. Dick Hickock and Perry Smith, both on parole from prison, set out to rob the home of Herbert Clutter, a prosperous Kansas farmer whom they have never seen. Having secured what little money the Clutters have on hand, they are about to leave when Perry suddenly cuts Clutter's throat and shoots him. While Dick holds a flashlight on the faces of the bound victims, Perry then methodically murders Kenyon, the Clutters' teenage son; Nancy, their teenage daughter; and Mrs. Clutter. Is money the motive? Obviously not. From the very beginning Dick's plan for the robbery includes the massacre of the entire household ("we'll blast hair all over them walls"), and though the ostensible reason for this extreme expedient is the need to dispose of witnesses, Dick resists Perry's suggestion that they disguise their identities by wearing stocking masks. Evidently he is determined on murder for its own sake. At the crucial moment, however, when he is apparently prepared to leave without following the plan to its bloody conclusion, it is Perry who initiates the slaughter by slitting Clutter's throat. And he does so not because he is worried about witnesses, and not because he feels any antagonism towards the victims, but because he is enraged at Dick, whose bullying of the Clutters and whose unwillingness to admit that the robbery is a failure has aroused his hatred and contempt. This psychological maze is further complicated by Dick's later admission that his principal reason for undertaking the robbery was to rape Nancy, a crime he would have perpetrated if Perry, always disgusted



by sexual license, had not prevented him from doing so. Until the very moment of the murders, in fact, Perry treats the Clutters with a weird gentleness, placing a mattress box under Mr. Clutter so that he will not have to lie on the cold floor, propping Kenyon up with a pillow, and tucking the women into their beds as if they were infants. From these incredible convolutions of greed, blood lust, sexual desire, hatred, and tenderness, Capote extracts no simple lessons. And though he presents for the reader's consideration a psychiatrist's explanation of Perry's evident madness, he does not insist on the accuracy of this diagnosis, which in any case fails to account for many of the contradictions in Perry's behavior, and ignores the inscrutable Dick entirely.

Even a broad sociological view of the murder fails to disclose a comprehensible pattern. This is not to say that the crime has no sociological significance or that Capote is unaware of it. Obviously Dick and Perry come from a world that the respectable Clutters have never known, and there is something at once ludicrous and heartrending in the naivete of Nancy's question to Dick about why he goes around robbing people. But neither the killers nor their victims quite conform to the familiar stereotypes. Dick is the product of a respectable, law-abiding family, poor but not destitute, and seems admirably equipped to get along successfully in a bourgeois environment. He enjoys certain natural advantages over Kenyon Clutter, for example. He has an easy manner, is popular with girls, and is good at sports. Mrs. Clutter, on the other hand, the wife of a faithful and considerate husband and the mother of four intelligent children, suffers from an incapacitating neurosis that confines her much of the time to her bed. Having realized what is presumably the dream of millions of middle-class girls, she is less capable than either of the killers of meeting the demands of ordinary life, is even less at home in the world, perhaps, than they are. But what seems to me a grimly ironic comment on any sociological theory of the crime is the tale Dick fabricates for Nancy to explain his criminality. In Perry's words, "he toss[ed] her a tear-jerker—said he'd been raised an orphan in an orphan-

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age, and how nobody had ever loved him, and his only relative was a sister who lived with men without marrying them." This is precisely the kind of explanation that the twentieth century has taught us to expect. Though it is clearly relevant to Perry's case — in fact, there is a vague parallelism between this "tearjerker" and the facts of Perry's life—it is in no way relevant to Dick's. And that makes all the difference.

Writing in the *New York Review of Books,* F. W. Dupee has ridiculed the term "non-fiction novel" and insisted that *In Cold Blood* must be read as fact. No doubt it must. But surely there is a difference between fact novelistically manipulated and fact merely reported, just as there is a difference between a narrative version of a trial and the official transcript. For this reason the designation "non-fiction novel" seems apt. It suggests, among other things, that the book must be judged according to the success with which fact is accommodated to fictional methods, or vice versa. Judged in this way, *In Cold Blood* is still an impressive achievement, but it suffers from at least one serious flaw.

The trouble, I think, lies in the difference between Dick and Perry. In stressing the mysteries of Capote's terrifying story, I have returned again and again to Dick, but it is Perry who dominates the book. Because he reveals his dreams, his waking fantasies, his fears and hatreds, he takes on a weight and a solidity in our imaginations that Dick does not, and we are left with the impression that of the two men Perry is by far the more complex. What makes this impression especially vivid, however, is Capote's novelistic device of dramatizing his characters' thoughts. A case in point is the only scene in the book treated from the points of view of both the killers, the scene in which Perry voices his fear that the two of them may be abnormal. Here is a sample of Dick's "thinking":

> He was annoyed. Annoyed as hell. Why the hell couldn't Perry shut up? Christ Jesus, what damn good did it do, always dragging the goddam thing up? It really was *annoying*. Especially since they'd agreed, sort of, not to talk about the goddam thing. Just forget it.

And here is a sample of Perry's:

> He agreed with Dick: Why go on talking about it? But he could not always stop himself. Spells of helplessness occurred, moments when he "remembered things"—blue light exploding in a black room, the glass eyes of a big toy bear —and when voices, a particular few words, started nagging his mind: "Oh, no! Oh, please! No! No! No! No! Don't! Oh, please don't, please!" And certain sounds returned — a silver dollar rolling across a floor, boot steps on hardwood stairs, and the sounds of breathing, the gasps, the hysterical inhalations of a man with a severed windpipe.

Both in matter and manner—note the vulgar, fragmented, generalized language of Dick's thoughts, the formal, rhythmically structured, imagistic language of Perry's—these passages suggest not only that Dick is less sensitive and imaginative than Perry, but that he is scarcely capable of thinking and feeling at all.

But surely a man who habitually went out of his way to run down dogs in the street, who was sexually attracted to children, who planned a combined robbery, rape, and murder, and who repeatedly insisted, in spite of everything that he was "a normal"—surely such a man cannot have been the psychological cipher that the book makes him out to have been. And it is this failure to get beyond the surface of Dick's mind that points up the dangers of Capote's interior monologues. For, dependent as he is on the candor of his subjects, he can dramatize only so much of their mental lives as they deign to discuss. Thus if Dick does not talk about the mrder, he does not, so far as Capote is concerned, think about the murder. If he does not talk about his dreams, he has no dreams. If he does not talk about his fantasies, he has no fantasies. In Capote's fictionalized non-fictional world, an unopened book is reduced to its cover.

In Cold Blood, therefore, has to be read with a little caution. Though it is in some ways admirably sensitive to mysteries, it tends to obscure the mystery of the mind's disguises, whose solution may defy the most diligent research, the most accurate notes.

Robert Ryley

LETTERS NEVER MAILED DEPARTMENT

Arkansaw, Wisconsin
March 2, 1966

Mr. Elliott Baker
c/o G. P. Putnam's Sons
Publishers
210 Madison Avenue
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Baker:

I just finished reading your $10,000-Putnam-Prize-winner novel, *A Fine Madness.* (Being a slow reader, the copy I managed to borrow was a Signet paperback edition). It is obvious that neither you nor your publisher would give two beans to be studied by the current crop of students of literature who clutter college campuses. What madness makes you ignore the really *serious* critics? Someone must warn you before it is too late, your career is ruined, and you end up as rich and successful as Somerset Maghm.

One complaint is that this is a well-wrought novel, carefully carpentered with a beginning, a middle, and an end. All the characters are motivated. The situations grow out of each other and dovetail into each other. *A Fine Madness* is the product of an excellent craftsman. You *worked* on this novel.

A second significant error is your creation of characters: none of them are perverted, despicable, mean, nor rotten-to-the-core. Don't you want to be taken seriously? It is true that the cast includes ridiculous, silly incompetents, some preposterous mental aberrants, at least one blindly vicious one, and many who are so short-sighted they can't see beyond their eyelashes. This does redeem a few points for you, but not enough.

Most damning of all, you commit the cardinal sin. You *love* people and permit this love to permeate this marvellously entertaining novel.

Repent before it is too late.

Altruistically yours,
Diogenes Jones

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TOO MUCH & TOO LITTLE

Where the Music Was. Charles East. Harcourt, Brace, and World, New York, 1965. 180 pages. $3.95.

The System of Dante's Hell. Leroi Jones. Grove Press, New York, 1965. 154 pages. $3.95.

If Leroi Jones and Charles East should ever meet, they would probably be uncomfortable—judging from their published work — in each other's company. Jones, whose poetry and plays have made him a controversial spokesman for the more militant elements of the Negro revolution, would dismiss East quickly from his mind as a "square." East, editor of the Louisiana State University Press, would be curious at Jones' rantings and ravings and eventually label him a "curiosity." What the two have in common is their youth and the fact that they have now published first volumes of fiction which concern, in no small part, Negro-white relationships.

Where the Music Was consists of fifteen short stories which concern, for the most part, Mississippi eccentrics, especially aging spinsters, and which are embedded solidly in the conventions of the Southern short story. The stories owe debts to many Southern writers—Peter Taylor, Eudora Welty, and Carson McCullers come to mind over and over—and East seldom puts a distinctive stamp on any of them. In "Four Minutes to the Bridge," for example, Miss Lottie Sykes fights to keep the state from razing or moving her stately ancestral house to make way for a new expressway. "A Summer Memory" tells of Miss Caroline Armstead, who slays her Negro servant with a parasol in a fit of anger and ultimately convinces a jury that the slaying was no one's business but her own since "Marianna was my nigra woman." In "The Ears of the World" Miss Willie Mangham, who has been the town confidante through the years, puts the townspeople up in arms when they learn that she is writing a book about what she has heard. This is not to say that East's stories are without value. His style is excellent; his ability to construct a story is considerable; and, within the tradition, he is a competent practitoner. The trouble is that all the other Southern short story writers keep getting in East's and thus in the reader's way.

While East portrays the South as a pond in which the racial, economic, and political progress of recent years has produced hardly a ripple, Jones, near the end of *The System of Dante's Hell,* throws a giant boulder of hatred into that pond. Jones attempts to do for the Negro ghettos of Newark in terms of Dante's *Inferno* what Joyce did for Dublin in terms of Homer's *Odyssey.* The imposition of this form is arbitrary. Jones is not Joyce, and he does not need Dante's help to convey his message: Negro ghettos are hell! But he does need someone's help. Most of the book is given over to staccato, impressionistic sketches which have no plot or developed characters, and the reader is soon reduced to reading it as if he were listening to a gruesome private joke in which he could not catch the point. Only in "The Heretics," the sustained narrative which concerns the relationship between the narrator and a prostitute named Peaches in a Negro ghetto outside a Southern army camp, does Jones' fury become articulate.

Ultimately East suffers from too much discipline while Jones suffers from too little, and their meeting might not be a bad idea. They might teach each other quite a bit — if only literary strengths could be transmitted so easily!

Roy Proctor

EUROPE Au GO-GO

Let's Go: The Student Guide to Europe, 1966. Richard Tillinghast (ed.). Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Student Agencies, 1965. 260 pp. $1.95.

Student travel and study programs abroad are the dreams of the undergraduate. Capitalizing on the rising surge of American students travelling to Europe, a clever group of ambitious business students at Harvard has assembled a guide to European living, dining, and transportation geared solely for the student and his limited wallet. Harvard Student Agencies, Inc. claims to be a college level Junior Achievement-type corporation whose profits finance many undergraduate careers at the Harvard School of Business.

There is yet to be a truly satisfactory travel guide. *Let's Go* certainly is not perfect, but it is good. It seems as if the editors did a bit of stylistic borrowing from the sickeningly friendly, folksey works by Arthur Frommer and his "beloved wife" Hope Arthur, the parents of the *Europe on $5 a Day* series. The advantage of *Let's Go* is that it lists accommodations primarily suited for students and omits all those Left Bank cheap tourist hotels which Frommer recommends and into which one can never get because someone else with his copy of *Europe on $5* . . . got there first.

Student Agencies has subsidized the book with several advertisements, but they're useful ones: the German Federal Railroad on the Eurailpass, car rental agencies, transportation companies, and European Chambers of Commerce blurbs.

If one remembers that generalizations always have exceptions, the forty-four page introduction is adequate. Included in the introduction are the customary currency tables and capsule vocabularies, but also listed are the addresses of student organizations and student travel offices abroad. One of the most endearing qualities of the introduction is that it heaps long-deserved anathema upon the American Express Company and advises students to use the English firm, Thomas Cook and Sons, for mail and for less expensive travellers' checks. There is an index of Thomas Cook's European offices (as well as one for American Express).

Unique are the sections on buying art in Europe — a little unrealistic—and on wine-tasting tours in France. Hitchhiking and camping are discussed more fully than in most other guides.

Above all, the information given in *Let's Go,* while sketchy and perhaps a little too generalized, is for the most part accurate. There are errors: women can indeed visit most English pubs. There are omissions:

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Spain's most fabulous sight—Toledo—gets not one line. Nevertheless, *Let's Go* is a welcome friend for those students who plan to "do Europe." It is even useful as a brief introduction for those student travellers who intend to have a more leisurely, more intimate travel experience overseas.

Tom Kingston

CONTAGIOUS MAGIC

Criers and Kibitzers, Kibitzers and Criers. Stanley Elkin. New York, Random House, 1966. 272 pp. $4.95.

Meet Jake Greenspahn, mourning his dead son of 23 who stole from his father's cash register — Jake, committing suicide to fight the chain stores, moving from one aggravation to the next among the "criers, ignorant of hope, the *kibitzers,* ignorant of despair."

Meet the orphan, Ed Wolfe, who looks out for himself; Ed gets fired from the collection business because he's got too much of a real feeling for it.

Meet Preminger, "Among the Witnesses" at a small hotel ("Does Spinoza get his name written on towels?") where a young girl is drowned in the swimming pool;

and Bertie, "The Guest" in Preminger's apartment in St. Louis ("you don't know what square *is* till you've worked in a supermarket . . . . They pipe in Mantovani.");

and Feldman, dying of cancer, discovering that "dissolution and death are not as inscrutable as they're cracked up to be. They're scrutable as hell."

Meet Khardov's son, wearing the medallion his father gave him, crossing and re-crossing the seas, a lost "Columbus," finding but surrendering the resemblance between himself and the duke of a far country.

and Push, the bully, tormentor of cripples and kids who wear glasses, undone by a prince of a guy who won't be pushed.

and meet the Lousy People —"pervert Belgium; Ox Hersh; Rabbi Old Guy, a crazy Yeshiva kid who told us he liked to spit in the *shul* because he was mad at God for Hitler"; Danny Lubell; Shelly Malkin; and Eugene Lepransky, who hid himself in his apartment soon after Pearl Harbor was bombed. On V-J Day, "he came downstairs for the first time in four years." When interest in his war experiences flags, Lepransky will tell you how he drove around in a car with a beautiful girl: "up front is the mayor and his girl. . . . Just the four of us. Me and her and the mayor of the City of New York and his date. Necking."

And meet Morty Perlmutter, world-traveller, who hypnotizes people with his Haitian Sleep Stone, to get at their truths, while he moves in on the ultimate Truth in Union Square Park.

Stanley Elkin smokes out the pundit in all of them—the pious and the depraved, the smart-aleck kids and the crabby old men. (Where are the women? Never mind; you won't miss them.) Halfway through the first page of any one of these nine stories, he's got the Sleep Stone working. And the magic is contagious. One voyage in his world, and we're all Morty Perlmutters.

A. Farrell Borenstein

HORATIO ALGER IN HARLEM

The Wig. A Mirror Image by Charles Wright. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1966. 179 pp. $3.95.

When Charles Wright's first novel, a short realistic tale in the first-person called *The Messenger,* was published in 1963, we were skeptical. True, the book had the anguished ring of authenticity. True, there was some talented writing however undisciplined and crude the technique. But the novel seemed frenetically autobiographical, and even the publishers tipped us off that Mr. Wright had worked as a messenger in New York City. So we smiled wisely and decided the book was a one-shot thing. That was the last we would hear from Mr. Wright.

But it wasn't. His second novel, *The Wig,* is now in our hands, and it is better than the first: more original, more timely, more sophisticated in vision and in craft. There can be no doubt now that Mr. Wright has more books in him than the usual *roman a clef.*

The Wig is, first of all, fiercely funny. The publishers call it a *comédie noire,* and if any of the American novelists practicing today are Black Humorists, Wright is. Like works by Thomas Pyncheon, Joseph Heller, Terry Southern, et al, *The Wig* walks that thin line between fantasy and reality, chronicaling the absurdity and near-hysteria of our mid-Twentieth Century American existence. The father of the Black Humorists, of course, is Nathanael West, and *The Wig* superficially resembles West's underrated comedy, *A Cool Million, or, The Dismantling of Lemuel Pitkin.* In that 1934 novel Pitkin sets out to find fame and fortune in the tradition of American free enterprise. West gives us the Horatio Alger myth in reverse: Instead of achieving his ambition Pitkin is victim of many atrocities, losing his teeth, eyes, scalp, a leg, is thrown into jail, and ultimately is assassinated. Along the way the novel satirizes Communism and Fascism as it existed in this country in the 1930's.

The Wig is thoroughly a product of the 1960's, however. Instead of anti-Democracy fanatics, Wright's young-man-on-the-make, Lester Jefferson, encounters anti-Negro and anti-Puerto Rican bigots. The satire is just as pointed, and wounds just as deeply. An example of Wright's vision is the description of a White House reception for little Jimmie Wishbone, Negro entertainer: "At the cold cornbread and molasses breakfast, Congressmen had sung 'He's a Jolly Good Nigger.' Later, they had presented him with a medal, gold-plated, the size of a silver dollar, carved with the figure of a naked black man swinging from a pecan tree."

Lester Jefferson wants nothing more than to become a member of The Great Society and to have a little change in his pocket. But his efforts are doomed from the beginning by the fact of his being a Negro. Looking

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about, Lester observes that everyone in this world has a gimmick. His gimmick will be to apply Silky Smooth hair lotion to his kinky curls, to make him more socially acceptable. He was sure it would work; the man in the drugstore told him when he purchased it, "With this, you may become whatever you desire."

But of course he can't. His wig (Negro slang for hair) turns into burnished silken curls, but still his pigmentation closes doors which otherwise would be opened. The Negro girl he would love will not allow him to sleep with her without paying. (A girl has to make her living somehow.) His efforts at becoming a populuar rock-and-roll idol fail. He gives away his only fifty dollars to a man on the street whose appearance haunts him: "Around the man's waist was a flexible chastity belt at least ten inches wide. Engraved letters on the belt read: 'I paid good money for this sturdy black man. He belongs to me and not to God.' "

At one point in the novel Lester finds he is not qualified for a janitorial job in a bank. Another day he encounters a mother slamming her little boy in the face. Lester asks what the white boy did to deserve such a punishment. The answer? "He doesn't want to go to a segregated school." Beaten by the world Lester Jefferson finally accepts the only job he finds open to him: He becomes a chicken man for The King of Southern Fried Chicken. Dressed in a feathered chicken costume he crawls on his hands and knees, ten hours a day, five and a half days a week, through the streets of Harlem, crying out advertisements for chicken. In this position of servitude, continually reminded of the curse of slavery, Lester Jefferson can only dream of becoming a part of The Great Society. Still he is hopeful. He figures that "if I cackled hard and didn't quit I was bound to get a raise." At the novel's conclusion Lester is informed that his girl has been run over in the street and killed. In a final act of renunciation he allows himself to be sterilized.

During the course of these various misadventures, the reader is introduced to various characters who share Lester Jefferson's ghetto existence: Mr. Fishback, the necrophilic funeral director; Nonnie, the deranged hag who is perpetually *enciente;* Miss Sandra Hanover, a tranvestite male for whom the movies are the ultimate reality; the Deb, a Harlem streetwalker; Madame X, who guarantees her exclusive method for immunity to love; and Little Jimmie, the has-been movie star. Not a pretty gallery, to be sure, but their absurdities and grotesqueries are to be found everywhere in today's headlines.

The danger in writing this type of shrill episodic novel is the extreme difficulty of sustaining the humor and the outrage from beginning to end. In this sense the book is not totally successful. Nothing equals Chapter 2, which Miss Sandra Hanover dominates, and Chapter 12, in which Lester kills platoons of cunning rats in his boarding house. Lester Jefferson's defeat also should have hinged upon racial discrimination, some final outrage against humanity, rather than upon a failure in romance. Wright dissipates some of the social and political implications of the novel before its conclusion. But *The Wig* is a good book, a funny book, and — perhaps the cliché should after all be uttered — a very promising book. After the realism of *The Messenger* and the surrealism of *The Wig,* it is tantalizing to contemplate what form Mr. Wright's third novel will take.

Robert Phillips

A BOOKE OF MAGICK (SICK)

The Nightclerk, Stephen Schneck. New York, Grove Press, Inc., 1965. 206 pp. $4.95.

It has been 27 years since the publication of that famous book that begins with a lower-case letter in the middle of a sentence; *The Nightclerk* duplicates that momentous feat, but the comparison ends there. Typographical tricks are Stephen Schneck's stock-in-trade: varieties of type size, paragraphs that begin a word or two from the right margin, mock newspaper columns, transitions between paragraphs in mid-sentence, handwritten notes, even a line drawing. Yet few readers who insist upon literary merit in addition to frills and fringe benefits will be fooled by *The Nightclerk.* It is an unremittingly atrocious novel.

There is nothing about the book that is not pretentious: the writing style, the intrusion of the author's smugness, a comic-strip jacket front, the posturing of the autobiographical note replete with self-inflating comment, a back jacket photo "sang-froid with no necktie" (to quote William Gaddis), the exaggerated praise of the inner lapels of the dust jacket, and the dollar-value designation included with the name of the Prize the book has garnered. *The Nightclerk* is apparently the fifth nag to win the annual $10,000 Formenter sweepstakes, and it is to Mr. Schneck's credit for consistency that his book in no way mars the complete lack of distinction demonstrated by the previous winners. (The fishes on the Formenter seal are beginning to stink.)

The Nightclerk is an exercise in San Francisco Gothic (or Gothick). Its central figure is a shady nightclerk (weighing over a quarter of a ton) of a seedy hotel six stories high and a city block wide. He idles away the night hours on the job (his night off is spent committing vampiric atrocities, he suspects) reading cheap pornography, taking snuff, cutting out pinups, registering unsavory guests, listening to the whispered accusations of the shadows, dozing, and dredging up the items of his past that deal with his beloved nymphomaniacal wife — serving the reader the only slice of plot that he is going to get for his efforts. J. Spenser Blight at 623 pounds (the figure varies) is hailed by the dust jacket blurb as the "fattest man in American literature" (imagine the feverish research activities at Grove Press to produce that finding!) — but that is not quite accurate. *The Nightclerk* is not a part of American literature by any stretch of the literate imagination, nor is Blight a man by any human standards, and pound-for-pound, specie-for-specie, Moby Dick has him beat. There are no laws by which jacket blurbs are constrained to any degree

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of accuracy, and we are accustomed to the most far-fetched comparisons with the greatest works of literature, but to equate this novel with a Marx Brothers' movie is not only dishonesty, but sacrilege! *The Nightclerk* is presumably anti-pornography, with Blight as anti-hero and anti-villain of the piece, and is intended as a spoof of pornography (although we have only the dust jacket's word for it). It is a Marquis de Sade cream-puff or a Krafft-Ebing fruitcake (Candy-coated), and yet for a book that deals with sex and its multiple variations and aberrations, and its intended to be "an outrageous parody," it commits the unpardonable sin of being unrelenting dull. Blight and spouse when rich visit all the erotic pleasure-pots of the world, and when broke engage in peddling the most extreme pleasures to the most perverted debauchees of San Francisco, and yet all Mr. Schneck can come up with are the usual whips and scanties, daisy chains and torture racks. The lack of imagination is astounding, and the technique embarrassingly familiar: detailed description of trivia leads to the moment of revelation, but the lights go out and the scene changes (over and over again). Even the misprints detract nothing: a "whipping-ash plant" seems as real and logical as anything else in the book.

Since this is the author's first effort, perhaps a word or two of *constructive* criticism might be offered. If Mr. Schneck is determined to grow up to be Franz Kafka, he is going about it all wrong. He credits himself at 33 with having lived a fascinating life ("My entire life," he modestly confesses, "has been devoted to providing good copy for the back of a book jacket"), but he has produced a bore of a book. Perhaps what he needs is a good, dull job, a father who is an authority figure, a serious illness every so often, and a strong sense of responsibility about the world he lives in — perhaps the painful tedium of a real life would produce an interesting and intelligent novel.

What he has palmed off on us instead is literary pastiche with the guts removed. The book is as bloated and inflated as the hero himself, and a lightweight nonetheless. It is an attempted hybridization of *The Castle* and *The Castle of Otranto,* Strawberry Hill and *Fanny Hill,* "Metamorphosis" and Miss Fury. The reader will recognize the varieties of sexual experience when he first encounters the prostitute-cum-horsetail from Genet's *Balcony,* but will miss Genet's political perspective; whole sections will smack of the Circe chapter of *Ulysses,* but the reader will yearn for Joyce's humor and understatement. But should Mr. Schneck aspire to something less than a niche among the greats, let him take a lesson from a good crafstman: he has attempted in *The Nightclerk* to demonstrate that the labyrinthine corridors of the *Travelers Hotel* are symbolic of the nether regions of sordid existence, but what Graham Greene was able to do in *Ministry of Fear* (just an "entertainment," remember) with a mysterious hotel corridor in two or three paragraphs should be an education in the art of writing that the full $10,000 of the Formentor Prize could never buy.

Bernard Benstock

OLD VERITIES

One of the Founders. P. H. Newby. J. B. Lippincott Company, 1965. 285 pp. $4.95.

The lions have fled the arena and left it to jackals and hyenas. On soil stained with the blood of martyrs, stands an old weak-sighted man preaching peace. Priests are introspective sons of Irish barkeepers. Crucifixes come in celluloid packages and may be worn as necklaces. The world is smaller. Sainthood is old hat. Novelists must be careful.

For most of his novel, Mr. Newby is scrupulously careful to clothe his hero modestly. Ian Hedges is as anomalous as his name: an uncouth combination of ineffectual Celtic romance and English common sense. Hedges purchased his crosses in a five-and-dime: his residence, the smoky provincial city of Perstowe, and his ill-defined administrative post in a local school. His age, 39, foreshadows a gentle, unremarkable decline into oblivion.

Hedges is given to devastating self-analysis. In a moment of rapture, he plumps for a new university as a means of building a "New Jerusalem" in Perstowe; but, lest anyone mistake him for William Blake, he later withdraws from the scheme, having decided that it was merely a means of building his own ego. When a woman turns up at his home to spend the night with him, he thinks that she is seeking a father-replacement. When Freud comes, sainthood retreats.

As a lover, Hedges is sporadically active but, almost to the end, singularly unsuccessful and ludicrous. One day when he pops home from the office, his wife coolly and tersely announces that she is leaving him for another man. Hedges had suspected nothing. His first sexual encounter after her departure — a dismally long while after — is with a young woman, Prudence Styles, who teaches at his school. She repulses him by stabbing his foot with her stiletto heel. Again time passes, in slow and painful recuperation. When next Hedges seeks out the same young woman, he succeeds; but his technique still lacks amorous beatitude: ". . . . it was as though he could not stop walking toward her: he *collided* with her frontally. He saw her mouth fly open. He grabbed her, thinking he might be knocking her down. It was a confused encounter."

In his apparently helpless and characteristic passivity, Hedges irresistibly tempts the friendly or even the neutral to save him. The inimical, like his ex-wife, simply use him; since he still loves her and is friendly to her new husband, she drains him of money. When the husband jumps bail that Hedges had put up for him and writes from Italy for his dictionary, Hedges instead buys him a new one and sends it.

It may already be apparent, however, that you can't keep a good saint down; radiance shines through the hairiest shirts and the most farcical scrapes. The stiletto heel is a true crucifixial nail — or at any rate as true as these degenerate days will permit. Mr. Newby attempts to manage Hedges' swordfight with a drunk (again the husband) who is threatening the university

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committee so that Hedges becomes neither noble (he lusts for his opponent's blood) nor heroic (he handles himself awkwardly). Still, Don Quixote has long been considered more saint than fool.

Eventually, Mr. Newby takes the wraps off, and we see Hedges naked, in his primitive purity and simplicity, decking his mother's grave, weeping as hs father nears death, impulsively kissing the dying man's hand. Since Prudence comes to him on the night his father is dying, he chastely lies on top of the covers. Before Prudence's arrival, he is capable of saying of her simply and without blushing, "I don't understand her. I love her." When he recovers from his father's death, he thinks of himself and Prudence: "Whatever happened, they would love each other and so be happy for ever and ever. He believed it. He had complete faith in it. Somehow they were going to carry his father forward into this happiness." They will.

Mr. Newby assumes that the old verities and pieties still have power to move and uplift. He is right.

T. B. Gilmore

THE MISSING MAN

The Unloved Germans. Hermann Eich. New York, Stein and Day, 1965. 225 pp. $6.95.

The Germans, said Goethe, are "so worthy as individuals, so wretched in the mass." According to Paul Claudel, they have no face; Nietzsche, setting his sights southward, commented that they "have no feet, only legs." In the "wretched" mass, the German image is of an inelegant, unattractive creature with a double chin and bull neck, fleshy or big-boned. His eyes are tiny, his mouth chiefly designed for enormous consumption of fodder; and he "is renowned for his beer-drinker's paunch." So much for the stereotype of appearance. As for his character, the German is portrayed in television shows, films, and plays "with his evil, distorted face as though forever frozen in the trenches of the last war."

And, says Herman Eich, this unloved German is a West German, never a Saxon or a Thuringian or a Brandenburger. "Foreigners from both West and East exhibit a remarkable unanimity in finding only the Germans from this side of the Iron Curtain unlovable."

More than once, Hermann Eich is ensnared in his own web of arguments. On the one hand, the German is absolved of responsibility for the consequences of Hitler's rise to power because these consequences were "unprecedented and contrary to all probability." On the other hand, he finds that German guilt lies "not in the mass-murders themselves but in giving Hitler carte blanche in his early years."

One day, it is hoped, "the world will find the moral strength to recall all these victims" (of the Second World War) "in one single act of mourning for the failure of our humanity." Very well, then. In the broadest sense, we are all murderers.

But some of us are more murderers than others. There were 30,000 people in the serried ranks of the Nazi death-squads. "From hearsay to eye-witness there were many degrees of knowledge and complicity."

Mr. Eich would have us see today's Germany as a veritable paradise for the Jew. Only perfect Jewish characters, he contends, are portrayed in contemporary German novels. Else one might be accused of anti-semitism, which is "equivalent of a sentence of death." He is particularly aggrieved because the writer who "stayed at his post" during the Nazi period is subject to harsh attack, although the similarly dedicated doctor or priest is not. (No distinction is made as to whether these writers were philologists or anthropologists, classicists or poets.)

Germans, Mr. Eich concedes, are perhaps "more prone than others to evade responsibility for their own failures and limitations." Yet, despite his recognition of the German's tendency to discuss history with the injured air of one who is never understood, his thesis ("a German has no alternative but to try to explain —not to excuse—the incomprehensible") is developed in this same tone. The German beats his breast; he cries *mea culpa.* But the index finger—the German index finger—is pointed at other times, other countries, other men.

The insistence in this book on the leftward-leaning world is a singular one, at least from these quarters. But that is another issue. The man who is absent from these knowledgeable, tormented pages never appeared at the Eichmann trial, either. In fact, in this century, we may be losing his whereabouts altogether. That is the fellow who accepts personal responsibility for the consequences of what he did and what he did not do.

A. Farrell Borenstein

BASIC GUNNERY

Shotguns and Shooting. E. S. McCawley. D. Van Nostrand Company, New Jersey, 1965. 146 pp. $5.95.

This is an excellent book for someone just beginning to be interested in hunting and target-shooting with a shotgun. A teen-age son or daughter, or a wife.

Shotguns and Shooting will have no appeal for the reader of Vance Bourjaily's *The Unnatural Enemy,* since it has no verbal style nor any subtlety of insight into hunter, hunted, or the experience of hunting. And all the information it contains is so basic that experienced gunners will find it like going back to kindergarten.

But the very things which make this book a bust for the seasoned shotgunner, make it perfect for the novice. Once we get past the purple, *Field and Stream*-style prose of page one, the language is simple, clear concise, and descriptive. A ten-year-old could understand it:

> The correct procedure is to mount the gun to the shoulder with both eyes open focused on the target, not the barrel. . . .

McCawley's information is basic: a very brief, uncomplicated history of the development of guns in gen-

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eral and shotguns in particular; explanations of the difference between gauge and caliber; the value of swing-and-follow-through shooting over spot shooting and pointing out; and the differences between trap and skeet shooting.

The sections on upland game hunting and waterfowling are equally informative and simple. Aside from practically tele-details on animals, birds, habitats, hunting techniques, and advice on field clothing, McCawley conveys some good advice to novice hunters with respect to the problems of conservation, farmer-hunter relationships, and reloading of shotgun shells for trap-, skeet-, and field shooting.

The chapter on the future of shooting sports which concludes the book is really too perfunctory to be of much use and probably should have been omitted. But the chapter on gun care and safety is excellent, and even the experienced field gunner could use it as a review.

Robert Dana

NOTHING MORE

Love in a Dark Street, and other stories, Irwin Shaw. Dial Press, New York, 1965. 285 pp. $4.95.

Yes, Irwin Shaw wrote that "classic" short story, "Girls In Their Summer Dresses." He has written many fine stories, collected in the volumes *Mixed Company, Tip On A Dead Jockey,* and others. His five novels, *The Young Lions* the most notable, were all good sellers, and *Life* Magazine called his last novel, *Voices Of A Summer Day,* "a beauty!" His latest book is a collection of short stories entitled *Love In A Dark Street.* This, too, can be called a "beauty," but frankly it is not much more.

It may be remembered that Shaw was one of that group of bright young writers which emerged after the Second World War, contemporary of Norman Mailer, Truman Capote, and Paul Bowles, all approaching their forties now. Critics of the early Shaw—his stories especially—labeled his works "products" too easily fabricated, too lightly managed. His prose shone but there was not much else to it. The reading was easy and enjoyable, the stories interesting and sometimes even compelling, but seldom was anything said beyond detailed emotions and usually unresolved conclusions. It seems that through the years, as Shaw's books and stories continue appearing, his thin guise of fabrication becomes more and more apparent.

The majority of the ten stories in *Love In A Dark Street* first appeared in *Playboy* and *Esquire,* and were well-suited to those magazines. The themes "of love . . . of violence . . . of folly" usually involve businessmen in their late thirties, either living in New York or visiting places far from there (but always connectable by jetliner or telephone), such as France or Switzerland. The title story (usually considered the best story in a book) is about a man in Paris (businessman: "neat American haircut, uncreased, neat Dacron suit, naive, questioning, blue, polite American eyes") who is lonely for New York and his sweetheart. As he awaits a transAtlantic call to his Betty, he views beneath his studio apartment window the typical love scenes of Paris: The lovers indulging in a dark doorway; then a fight between an old man and his pregnant daughter and the lover who will not marry her—even though she threatens to throw herself into the river. Then later the man who has bought a drink and flowers for a lady who refuses his advances. All three parties — lovers, quarrelers, and nonlovers — meet on the same street, the same evening, mix their conflicts and do their dances for the benefit of our businessman and the reader. It is all very clever, but what else? His call to Betty never went through, and such is the turn-out of the story.

Another, better story is "Noises In The City" where the businessmen are in a bar. There are two of them (in their late thirties and forties) who had met briefly years ago. Now one is taking a drink before going home to await his wife who is at the movies; the other is awaiting the execution of a plumber who raped and killed his wife one afternoon as she wandered about their apartment in a bathrobe. The two men buy each other drinks. The unfortunate one talks of ways of dying and the fortunate one runs home to find his wife safe in bed. This is unfair, of course, to outline a story so basely, but take the gloss away from Shaw's story and you haven't much else. Style and skill are indeed important, but what lies behind all that? Shaw injects a little here and there: a little analysis of his characters, a little profoundity of statement at the end of his stories, but beneath what he says openly there is very little to look for.

Love In A Dark Street is worth reading because it's good writing and entertaining, but put the book down and you have put the stories away forever.

David Meyer

ART SPEAKS FOR ITSELF

Pop Art, John Rublowsky. Basic Books, New York, 1965. 174 pp. $12.50

It's strange how often one's sense of propriety, convention, good taste, and tradition can inadvertently lessen brashness.

Rublowsky painstakingly points out that not only was he a billboard painter, but "Rosenquist was an artist with years of experience and thorough training. As an artist he knew what he was doing. The extravagant imagery utilized in his painting was neither accidental nor arbitrary. It has the same relationship to his work as the cubist idiom, for example, has to the work of Picasso." Whatever this last phrase means it is clearly intended to reassure us.

And another: "Wesselman's approach to art is classical, almost scholarly. He is involved with those problems of space and composition that have been the concern of the artist since art began."

And yet Rublowsky tells us that "we have the mak-

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ings of a new school or movement . . ." and "new paths are being charted" in which there have been "revealed new possibilities of beauty and wonder."

I have not caught Rublowsky in a self contradiction. Perhaps he has unconsciously articulated an interesting paradox.

Even when he explains the ramifications of pop art *vis a vis* abstract expressionism and concludes that "the tipped can explores the esthetic possibilities of the accidental and spontaneous, the hot dog explores the possibilities of the banal and the commonplace," one wonders how far this concept departs from the concepts of realism of Courbet in the 1850's in which Courbet also attempts to *epater les bourgeoisie* with a representation, without comment, of the commonplace.

Rublowsky reflects the same duality. He writes in a sober and even genteel manner which is a very different tone from that heard at a lecture of his in which this reviewer was exposed to the pitch of a breathless huckster.

Perhaps unwittingly, Rublowsky has manifested a problem which is first of all widespread in the milieu surrounding pop art. For example, Ivan Karp wears a conservative three piece suit with dark glasses, or a red shirt with a black tie depending upon whether he feels like a *capo don* or button man respectively, and yet he can speak like a Cambridge don on the art with which he deals. The Castelli gallery is in a building of Palladian restraint on the outside, with brothel red demask walls in the downstairs and stairway corridors, and in the smallish gallery the art eloquently speaks for itself.

Secondly, the hardsell side of the twofold approach to pop art perhaps can be explained by a rather shocking remark of Rublowsky's, viz., that "the school was and is a collector's movement." Certainly, if one thinks that, and I am romantic enough to hope that it is not the case, one must stimulate sales by method which have "been tested pragmatically through the years."

And yet, I feel no sales pitch is needed. As S. A. Green writes in the foreword to the book: "If like last year's model, pop art could be exhausted tomorrow, its statement will remain as a valued expression of our time . . . Tomorrow they leave to the future."

Hugh Lifson

THESE HALLOWED HALLS

Integration at Ole Miss, Russell W. Barrett. Quadrangle Books, Chicago, 1965. 270 pp. $4.95.

Having taught Political Science at the University of Mississippi since 1954, Professor Barrett possesses comparatively long experience with prejudice, segregation, and intolerance and of necessity has lived by and with equivocation, qualification, and hypocrisy.

When James Meredith began his long and ultimately successful battle to enroll at Ole Miss, Professor Barrett was one of those few who lent what small support he could to Meredith. Barrett's approach to this heady subject is essentially detached, his coverage is adequate, the result is, on the whole, satisfactory. Meredith emerges as stoical and determined, the agencies of government (federal, state, and local) were inept and corrupt. The University administrators were vacillating and feeble if viewed from the side of justice but politically adept and unswerving if judged by segregationist standards. With rare exceptions, the faculty lurks quietly, ineffectively and hypocritically in the columned background of these hallowed halls of higher learning.

One expects ignorance and violence from the deprived black and white. One expects deceit, chicanery, and double-talk from politicians. Regents and administrators are always suspect because their function is to maintain the *status quo* respected by those who installed them in positions of quasi power. However, it is demoralizing to have the faculty of an institution of higher learning revealed as either insensitive to conditions or hypocritically adjusting to a persisting situation whch epitomized everything a faculty must loathe and oppose.

From the highest (the Kennedys, Governor Barnett, etc.) to the lowest (the faculty and the students), only one emerges in this book with single, high-minded clarity of purpose, action and goal. That one is James Meredith.

Recommended reading.

Bernard E. Richardson

SAFE ON FIRST, PERHAPS

Religion in America, Winthrop S. Hudson. Charles Scribners Sons, New York, 1965. 447 pp. $7.95.

This book is, in a way, a history of religion in America just as the jacket proclaims. It begins in 1607 with the formative years, marches on to the new nation, navigates the years of midpassage, and touches home plate with modern America in the 1960's.

Religion in America is an unsatisfying book for this reader. Two disturbing factors emerge clearly: the attempt to cover 350 years of great diversity in 447 pages (i.e., about one page per year to deal with about 450 kinds of religious agencies that have had any influence on the development of this country), and, secondly, the abundance of footnotes (532 footnotes, or an average of 1.2 footnotes per page of text).

Ordinarily, expository footnotes intrigue this reader; however, the vast majority of these are simply blind alleys for the average reader ("See . . . ," "An account of this appears in . . . ," "This is discussed in . . .") Almost every scrap which piqued imagination led to a footnote directing one to a non-available source.

To cover all aspects of religion in America in one book necessitates selection; yet, can fragments totalling less than thirteen pages do any justice to Judaism? This is a fair example.

"A book for every reader at almost every level of interest and understanding" says the jacket. It may be that for the scholar or for the totally ignorant. For this mildly informed reader, that simply is not true.

Armarius

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Contributors

JAY BAIL was born in Pennsylvania and still lives in Philadelphia. His work has appeared in *Esquire*.

Born in England, RITA MEREDITH has obviously been on the go ever since. She has lived in Australia, Finland and the U. S. and has worked as "teacher, chambermaid, jewelry maker, secretary, laundry-worker, telephone solicitor, ticket-writer, library assistant, trophy assembler, credit interviewer, nurses' aide, waitress, editorial assistant, sportswear packer, flower seller, census taker." Many of her short stories have been published in American magazines. *"Who Answers Those Ads?"* is her first published article.

VAN K. BROCK teaches at Oglethorpe College in Atlanta. His poetry has appeared in *The New Yorker, Prairie Schooner,* and *Southern Poetry Today*.

A career officers in the U.S. Department of State Foreign Service, JEFF CORYDON III attended Phillips Andover Academy and Northwestern University. Fluent in French and Arabic, his next assignment is in Tunisia. He is married and has a son and a daughter. His work has appeared in *Tri-Quarterly*.

MARK COSTELLO, a former Marine, teaches at Wichita State University. A story of his recently appeared in *Epoch*.

Now Professor of History at San Diego State College, WILLIAM HANCHETT has taught at Colorado State University and the University of Colorado. His articles have appeared in numerous magazines including *Western Humanities Review* and *Frontier* in 1965.

MABEL HICKS is retired from a long career as a public school teacher and has had five stories published in the past two years.

BERNARD STREMPEK was born October 10, 1930, and died in an automobile accident November 25, 1964. At that time he was a member of the faculty of the Miami-Ohio State University campus in Dayton (now named Wright State University), and had prepared for publication a chapbook of twenty-four poems. His poems in this issue are taken from *Breathing,* a (larger) posthumous pamphlet, which may be purchased from its editor, Robert Merideth, Director of American Studies, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, 45056.

JAMES TATE was born in 1943 in Kansas City, and is currently a student in the Poetry Workshop at The University of Iowa.

MICHAEL VAN WALLEGHEN, born in Detroit, teaches at Wichita State University. His poetry has appeared in *New Campus Writing* and elsewhere.

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